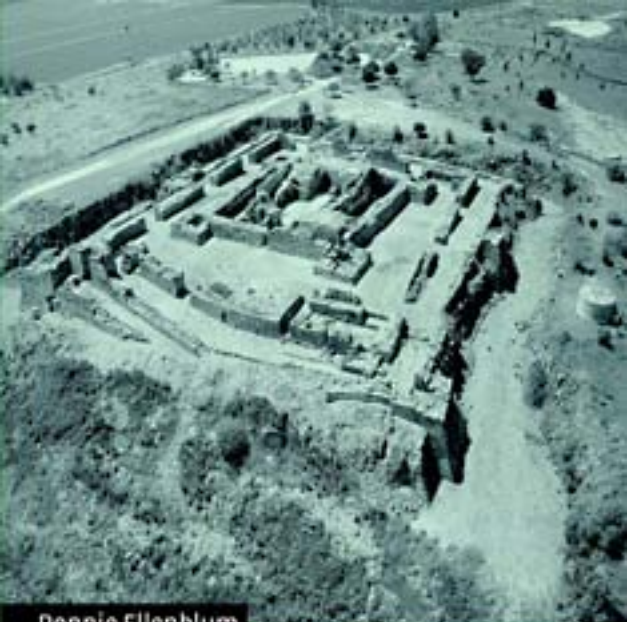




Ronnie Ellenblum

Crusader Castles and Modern Histories

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CRUSADER CASTLES AND MODERN HISTORIES

For the last 150 years the historiography of the Crusades has been dominated by nationalist and colonialist discourses in Europe and the Levant. These modern histories have interpreted the Crusades in terms of dichotomous camps, Frankish and Muslim. In this revisionist study, Ronnie Ellenblum presents an interpretation of Crusader historiography that instead defines military and architectural relations between the Franks, local Christians, Muslims and Turks in terms of continuous dialogue, and mutual influence. Through close analysis of siege tactics, defensive strategies, and the structure and distribution of crusader castles, Ellenblum relates patterns of crusader settlement to their environment and demonstrates the influence of opposing cultures on tactics and fortifications. He argues that fortifications were often built according to economic and geographic considerations rather than for strategic reasons or to protect illusory 'frontiers', and that crusader castles are the most evident expression of a cultural dialogue between east and west.

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CRUSADER CASTLES AND MODERN HISTORIES

RONNIE ELLENBLUM

THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM



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*For my wife Lenore and my children Gali,
Yuval and Maya*

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Tamar Soffer produced the best possible maps and illustrations from my data. Yochay Goelle translated extensive parts of the manuscript into English and Uri Bitan helped me with the Arabic. I owe them thanks.

The book was written in Jerusalem while the city was torn apart by a bloody strife. I believe that the beauty of this eternal city inspired my opinions on multicultural communities and induced me to think differently about the ability of communities to coexist during a war.

The book is dedicated to my wife Lenore and to my children Gali, Yuval and Maya.

PART I

*National discourse and the study of
the Crusades*

From moral failure to a source of pride

On 11 April 1806, the Classe d'Histoire et de Littérature Ancienne of the Académie Française announced the subject for its annual historical competition. The participants were asked to 'Examine the effects which the Crusades had on the civil liberties of the peoples of Europe, on their civilisation, and on their progress towards enlightenment, commerce, and industry'. In other words, in 1806 the French Academy called for a reassessment of the Crusades in the light of the ideas of the French Revolution. The two prize-winners, announced on 1 July 1808, were Maxime de Choiseul-Daillecourt, a 26-year-old Frenchman, and Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren, a professor of history at the University of Göttingen. The manuscript submitted by the third candidate, Jan Hendrik Regembogen, who would later become a professor of theology in Leiden, was lost in the mail.¹

All three essays were true to the dictated guidelines and all of them portrayed the positive influence of the Crusades on Western civilisation as being all-inclusive and discernible in almost every cultural and material aspect of human life. They succeeded in tracing the positive influence of the Crusades even in such unexpected areas as the status of the peasantry, land ownership, development of the feudal system, court life, abolition of the duel as an instrument of justice, ascendancy of papal power, fine arts, geography, history, mathematics, astronomy, languages, poetry, and music. All these were mentioned in addition to aspects of medieval life in which the influence of the Crusades could be considered 'natural', such as the creation of the military orders, chivalry, heraldry, weaponry, commerce with Asia, the growth of Italian cities, maritime navigation,

¹ Choiseul-Daillecourt joined the French administration and eventually became a member of the French Academy. He was the only candidate who wrote his entry in French. Regembogen's entry was written in Latin, whereas only the French translation of Heeren's German essay was submitted to the committee. All three of them published their essays before 1809.

architecture, naval law, hospitals, and many more. All three authors, however, perceived the Crusades as a pan-European phenomenon which could not be ascribed to any particular nation or specific national movement: they were not defined as 'French', 'German', or 'English'. Even Gothic architecture, one of the 'positive aspects of the Crusades', was not yet interpreted as being more French or German than Syriac, Saracen, or Lombard.²

This functional and positive approach, which ignores any ethical or theological considerations, was indeed a novel perception of the Crusades. Early modern writers were more occupied with the negative morality implied by their failure. Many of them depicted the Crusades as a quasi-mythological epic that had begun heroically and ended in ignominy. The only way to resolve the apparent contradiction between the praiseworthy origin and the disastrous end was to provide readers with moral and theological justifications fitting for such an epic.³

Until then, the moral discourse had been based on the general understanding that the Crusades were a failure and that such failure deserves an appropriate, i.e., moral, explanation. Since there was punishment, obviously there had also been sin. The nature of the sins, however, and the exact identity of the sinners were disputed. Early modern Protestant authors tended to put the blame for the immoral nature of the Crusades on the papacy and the Catholic Church, whereas contemporary Catholic writers tended to rehabilitate the religious leaders and accuse the bearers of the Cross themselves (mainly for being too naïve and disobedient). But both Catholic and Protestant scholars applied an ethical yardstick when considering the impact of the Crusades on history.

The early nineteenth-century French royalist scholar Joseph-François Michaud (1767–1839) suggested, in the fourth volume of his monumental history of the Crusades (published in 1822), a threefold division of Crusader historiography: a period of favourable perception, which characterised the seventeenth century 'when scholars tended to admire the bearers of the Cross and to esteem their motives'; a second period (mainly during the eighteenth century) when 'scholars who were inspired by Protestant manner of thinking' condemned the Crusades; and a third period, which had already begun in the 1760s, when the tide changed again 'in the right direction'.⁴ Michaud attributed the last phase to

² Choiseul-Daillecourt, 1809, 154, 306; Regenbogen, 1809, 332–33.

³ For the volume and importance of medieval criticism on the Crusades, see Siberry, 1985.

⁴ Michaud, *Histoire*, IV, 1822, 162. For recent studies of Crusader historiography which accept Michaud's point of view, see Siberry, 2000; Siberry, 1995, 365–85; Tyerman, 1998; for modern

Scottish philosopher William Robertson, 'who was greatly influenced by the analytical spirit of research' and was therefore able to point to 'the great contribution of the Crusades to progress, freedom, and the advent of the human spirit'. But in accusing Protestant scholars and 'their followers' of condemning the Crusades, and in claiming that seventeenth-century scholars were less hostile towards the Crusades, Michaud ignored the moral discourse that had been going on unceasingly since the sixteenth (and in many ways since the thirteenth) century. Michaud was right in pointing out the great contribution of Protestant thinkers to the renewal of this discourse.⁵

Thomas Fuller, a sixteenth-century Cambridge-educated doctor of divinity, summarised the Protestant moral attack on Crusader history.⁶ Directing poisonous arrows at the leadership, Fuller accused the papacy of spilling blood unnecessarily, arrogance,⁷ disregarding treaties, and even placing itself in a position superior to God himself.⁸ The popes did not hesitate, he maintained, 'to exploit every simpleton'; the kingdom of England, especially, was 'the pope's pack-horse . . . which seldom rested in the stable when there was any work to be done.'⁹ The greedy Catholic Church, which always knew how to 'buy earth cheap and sell heaven dear,'¹⁰ made a profit even from the Crusades. 'Some say', he wrote, that 'purgatory fire heateth the pope's kitchen; they may add, the holy war filled his pot, if not paid for all of his second course.'¹¹

historiographic studies that do not share this point of view, see Kedar, 1998a, 11–31; Kedar, 1998b, 187–200; Kedar, 1999, 135–50. Compare also: Boase, 1937, 110–25; for the biography of Michaud see Poujoulat, 1841, I, vii–xlvii; Bordeaux, 1926; Richard, 2002.

⁵ For Luther's attitude towards the Crusades, see Martin Luther, 'To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate' (1520), trans. Charles M. Jacobs, in Helmut T. Lehmann and James Atkinson (eds.), *The Christian in Society*, in H. T. Lehmann (general ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. XLIV, 144; see also Martin Luther, 'Defense and explanation of all the Articles' (1521), trans. Charles M. Jacobs, in *Luther's Works*, vol. XXXII: George W. Forell (ed.), *Career of the Reformer*, II, Philadelphia, 1958, pp. 89–90; and see John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe: A New and Complete Edition*, Stephen R. Cattley (ed.), 8 vols. London, 1837–41, vol. IV, 1837, pp. 18–21, 27–34; Robertson, 1769.

⁶ See Fuller, 1639. Fuller's highly critical book was published in no less than four editions within fewer than thirteen years. For Fuller's personal history and political views see Patterson, 1979.

⁷ Fuller, 1639, book V, ch. 12, 249–51.

⁸ For the importance of this type of perfidy in Protestant thinking, see *Luther's Works*, vol. XXXII, p. 144.

⁹ Fuller, book I, ch. 13, 19–21.

¹⁰ '[B]y these sales the third part of the best feoffs in France came to be possessed by the clergy, who made good bargains for themselves, and had the conscience to buy earth cheap and sell heaven dear.' *Ibid.*, ch. 11, 18.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, book V, ch. 12, 251.

But Fuller also does not spare the rank-and-file Crusaders from the lash of his tongue. 'Many a whore was sent thither to find her virginity; many a murderer was enjoined to fight in the Holy War, to wash off the guilt of Christian blood by shedding blood of Turks.' The established Catholic royal houses which degenerated into disobedience, greed, and actual treason, were, however, even worse. 'One may wonder', he concluded, 'that the world should see most visions when it was most blind; and that age, most barren in learning, should be most fruitful in revelations.'¹² Fuller, like Martin Luther, Matthew Dresser, John Foxe, and other Protestant writers, deals with the Crusades from the moral point of view. In his opinion all the Crusades were a momentous moral failure; since they were born in sin, they failed because of their moral weaknesses.

Michaud was correct in claiming that Protestant authors were the vanguard of the Crusades' critics, but he also ignored the fact that such criticism had begun long before them, coming from the plumes of writers who were not Protestants yet levelled no less harsh ethical accusations against the Crusades. As already noted, many Catholic writers participated in the moral debate, although they usually succeeded in finding points of merit in the failed expeditions. There were Catholic scholars who glorified the Crusades for their heroic deeds and 'honoured the French court and nobility' of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but they were in the minority.¹³ An equivocal attitude towards the Crusades is exemplified by Joseph de Guignes, who describes the Crusades both as a demonstration of heroic zeal and as a devastating experience for the entire continent.¹⁴

Another Catholic author, Charles Lebeau, secretary of the French Academy in the third quarter of the eighteenth century,¹⁵ depicts the Crusades as 'the culmination of human evil', as 'devoid of any theological or moral justification', and as an episode that emanated from the 'lust for power and senseless chivalry'. But at the same time he tends to forgive the bearers of the Cross 'because of their pure intentions'. 'It is true', he says, 'that a man cannot be a martyr because of an act of war and the gates

¹² *Ibid.*, book v, ch. 16, 256–57; book II, ch. 4, 48; book I, ch. 8, p. II.

¹³ For a general discussion of the desire of absolutist nobility to associate itself with the values of medieval chivalry, see: Ward, 1975, 9; Gossman, 1968, *passim*.

¹⁴ De Guignes, vol. II, 1756, book XI, 14: 'Voilà ce qui rend condamnable à nos yeux une expédition dont laquelle nos ancêtres ont donné les plus grandes preuves de valeur & de zèle pour la Religion. . . Cette grande expédition qui changea la face de l'Asie Occidentale, qui cousta à l'Europe des millions d'hommes, & qui ruina un grand nombre de familles de France. . .' See also Mailly, 1780, and Schoepflin, 1726.

¹⁵ Lebeau, 1833, vol. XV.

of Heaven could not be opened by the threat of a sword, but we still owe some respect to these simple and pure souls who sacrificed their own lives in these wars.¹⁶ Lebeau, a Catholic, condemned the Crusades because of their immorality but refrained from condemning the popes who led them,¹⁷ or the 'heroes' and 'pure souls' who participated in them.¹⁸

Ethical discourse also dominated the writings of Voltaire (1694–1778) on the Crusades. Combining absolutist ideology with admiration for Louis XIV, in his *Histoire des Croisades* (first published in 1751)¹⁹ Voltaire traced the progress of Western civilisation,²⁰ which he believed attained its apogee during the reign of Louis XIV.²¹ For him, the fall of the Latin kingdom was a natural result of the weakness of its leadership, which he labelled 'a band of corrupt and ignorant criminals'.²²

Following his own absolutist ideas, Voltaire blamed the leadership for establishing a morally corrupt and unjust central government, whereas Diderot's rationalist *Encyclopédie*, which shared a negative attitude towards the Crusades, eschewed any religious standpoint.²³ 'It was hard to believe', said the compiler of the *Encyclopédie*, 'that . . . rulers and ordinary people could eventually not understand their own real interests . . . and drag a part of the world [into conquering] a small and unfortunate country in order to shed the blood of its populations and get control of a rock.' 'The Crusaders', he wrote, 'combined the political interests of the Pope together with the hatred of the Muslims, the ignorance and suppressive authority of the greedy clergy, and the bloodthirstiness of their rulers . . .' The popes and the rank-and-file Crusaders were to blame for the failure of this endeavour:

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 301–3.

¹⁷ For other contemporary negative references to the behaviour of the popes during the Crusades see Müller, 1709, 20–33.

¹⁸ Lebeau, p. 303: 'On y avait perdu des armées des héros, on n'en remporta que des armoiries, symboles bizarres qui honorent les familles du témoignage immortel de la pieuse imprudence de leurs ancêtres.'

¹⁹ Voltaire integrated this *Histoire des Croisades* into his *Essai*, 1756. For this discourse see 570; and also 552–61 (ch. 53).

²⁰ Voltaire does not use terms such as 'civilisation' or 'culture', which were unknown in his time, but his 'moeurs' and 'esprit' are equivalent. See Febvre, 1929; Tonnelat, 1941; Niedermann, 1941.

²¹ Weintraub, 1966, 43.

²² Voltaire, *Essai*, 1756, 570; see also *Oeuvres de Voltaire*, Paris, 1879, vol. XIII, p. 314: 'The loss of all these prodigious armies of Crusaders in a country which Alexander had subjugated with 40,000 men . . . demonstrates that in Christian undertakings there was a radical vice which necessarily destroyed them: this was the feudal government, the independence of commanders, and consequently disunion, disorder and lack of restraint.'

²³ Diderot, *Encyclopédie*, vol. IV, 502b–505b.

The dizziness passed from the crazed head of a pilgrim to the ambition-filled head of the pope and thence to the heads of all the rest . . . The Crusades served as a pretext for indebted peoples not to pay their debts; for evil-doers to avoid punishments for their crimes; for undisciplined clergymen to free themselves from the burden of their ecclesiastical state; for restless monks to leave their monasteries; for lost females to continue freely in their behaviour . . . Those whose duty it was to prevent all these . . . did not do so either because of their stupidity or because of their political interests . . . Peter the Hermit . . . led an army of eighty thousand robbers . . . how could we label them differently remembering the horrors they committed on their way – robbery, slaughter . . .

Eighteenth-century German scholars also shared this critical attitude, accusing the Crusaders of being barbarians who acted according to the standards of their time: 'Urban and Peter!' exclaims Wilhelm Friedrich Heller in 1780, 'the corpses of two millions of men lie heavy on your graves and will fearfully summon you on the day of judgement.'²⁴

It should be noted, however, that not all scholars of the time held such negative views of the Crusades. There were some, in both the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, who considered them to be a positive and important episode, but these were generally a small minority of scholars who were loyal to the royal courts of their day and to their own social class – the nobility. Louis Maimbourg, for example, a Jesuit priest and an enemy of the Jansenists who was a courtier of Louis XIV, refrains from dealing with the Crusaders' moral behaviour; his positive attitude stemmed from what he considers to have been their incomparable heroic greatness and deep Christian faith and sacrifice, and his own conviction that their heroic deeds had brought honour upon the French court and nobility. He wrote a history of the Crusades, dedicating it humbly to Louis XIV. From the introduction one learns that his work is intended for members of the nobility. He addresses his fellow nobles directly, assuring them that his book contains the names of all nobles mentioned in the sources at his disposal. However, should anyone 'of quality' claim that one of his forefathers who participated in the holy wars is not mentioned in the text, he is requested to send the author the historical documentation in his possession.²⁵

²⁴ Heller, 2nd edn, 1, 16.

²⁵ Maimbourg, 1685, 2–3: 'Si les personnes de qualité qui prétendent que quelques uns de leurs ancêtres aient eu part à ces guerres saintes, me font la grâce de m'envoyer de bonnes mémoires.' Even the Huguenot diplomat Jacques Bongars (1554–1612) who did not indulge in a criticism of the Papacy dedicated his book to Louis XIII and asserted that the kings of France had the closest concern with the Holy War. See Bongars, 1611, dedicatory preface; see also Bourdeille, 1876, ix, 433–34. For a discussion see Tyerman, 1998, 107–8.

Maimbourg was not alone. Other authors dealt in similar fashion with what they believed to be the positive role of the Crusades and their importance for French nobility. Such writings formed part of a genre which resulted from conservative political thinking and a desire to link present-day nobility to that of ancient France. Thus Jean Baptiste Mailly (1744–94) placed the Crusades on the same level as the Ligue and the Fronde, counting them among ‘the principal events in the history of France’.²⁶ It was not by chance that the Crusades were compared to those two great pro-monarchist episodes; this fitted in well with the political outlook of such authors.

Obviously, therefore, the controversy over the Crusades between the two schools – as suggested by Michaud – was not limited to the opposing views of the positive outlook on the Crusades, ‘which was prevalent in the seventeenth century’, and the negative one, ‘prevalent in the eighteenth century’. The controversy centred primarily around the degree to which the Crusades were morally justified and arose because it was universally admitted that they were indeed a failure.

A real conceptual change in the general attitude towards the Crusades can be discerned in a treatise written by Scottish pastor and philosopher William Robertson in 1769, but the roots of the change were already evident in the writing of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz a century earlier. Robertson, who was, together with Gibbon and Hume, one of the most important *philosophes* of the enlightenment in the British Isles, was not interested in the Crusades *per se* but in the development of society from the Roman period until the sixteenth century.²⁷ He certainly shared his predecessors’ moral negative outlook on the Middle Ages, which he conceived as a dark and ignorant epoch filled with ‘deeds of cruelty, perfidy and revenge so wild and enormous as almost to exceed belief’. But although he claimed that the Crusades were ‘a singular monument of human folly’, he did succeed in discerning indirect positive aspects in the very departure to the East.²⁸

Robertson believed that while crossing more civilised countries on their way to the Holy Land, the Crusaders were deeply impressed and later influenced by the advanced cultures. This was ‘the first event that roused Europe from the lethargy in which it had been long sunk, and that tended

²⁶ See Richard, 1997–98 and 2002.

²⁷ Robertson, 1769, 22ff. For Hume’s negative opinion on the Crusades see Hume, *History*, I, 209; For Gibbon’s opinions which were closer to Robertson’s see Gibbon, 1862, ch. 61, vol. VII, 346–49.

²⁸ Robertson, 24.

to introduce any change in government, or in manners'. Is it possible, he asked himself, for people to pass through civilised countries or a city like Constantinople without being influenced?

Their views enlarged, their prejudices wore off; new ideas crowded into their minds; and they must have been sensible on many occasions of the rusticity of their own manners when compared with those of a more polished people . . . And to these wild expeditions, the effect of superstition or folly, we owe the first gleams of light which tended to dispel barbarity and ignorance.²⁹

Passing through more developed countries explains, in Robertson's view, the appearance of splendid princely courts and ceremonies, more refined manners, the romantic spirit, etc. In other words, although he severely criticises the Crusades *per se*, Robertson does not ignore their positive side effects, which emanated from the very awareness of the existence of more developed cultures. Like Voltaire, Robertson tries to fathom the transition from a barbarian to a civilised society (he was one of the first to use the word 'civilisation'), but unlike Voltaire he developed a theory of the unconscious influence of cultured (Eastern and Italian) peoples upon the barbarians (the Crusaders) who crossed their lands. Robertson, therefore, does not praise the Crusades, but acknowledges them to be a critical stage in the development of Western civilisation and recognises the usefulness of journeys to the East. It seems that this point of view was influenced more by the popularity of the 'Grand Tour' than by the 'analytical spirit of research' which Michaud ascribed to him.

Robertson's views on the essence of civilisations and the manner in which they were imparted to others are worthy of wider discussion and more serious thought. However, what is important and relevant to our analysis of the Crusades, is that Robertson did not treat the expeditions merely as an episode which should be condemned on ethical grounds. He considered them to be an important, perhaps even critical, phase in the development of Western civilisation, recognising the advantages they offered the European nations. This utilitarian attitude, which evaluates the Crusades on the basis of their indirect influence, was the assumption which lay at the basis of the competition held by the Académie Française in 1808.

The influence of this way of interpretation can be better understood against the background of the Napoleonic wars, in the course of which, for the first time since the thirteenth century, the East was reconquered by

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

a European power. Napoleon's conquest of Egypt had an appreciable effect on the creation, once again, of a positive view of the Crusades and on the replacement of the moral attitude characteristic of most scholars who dealt with them until the late eighteenth century by a more utilitarian viewpoint. In the late 1790s, while Napoleon and France were gaining in strength, a document was discovered anew in Hanover which had been written over a century earlier, in 1672, by the philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz (1646–1716) and which even then hinted, according to some of its readers, at long-term French plans to gain control of Egypt.

Leibnitz, in the employ of the elector of Mainz, was concerned about French expansionism and tried to divert Louis XIV's aggression from the Low Countries to less dangerous objectives, such as Egypt.³⁰ He regarded the Crusades as the unfulfilled dream of many medieval leaders, among them Philip II Augustus and Saint Louis, which he believed could be achieved in his own time.³¹ The conquest of Egypt, wrote Leibnitz, would endow Louis XIV with the glory of a king who accomplished the dreams of his ancestors and would restore the title of 'Augustus of the East' to a French king. In short, new Crusades could glorify and bring honour and political gain to their initiators.³²

Leibnitz's memorandum was lost, to be rediscovered only in 1795 and then passed on from one French general to another. In August 1798 it was forwarded to General Mortier, who sent it to Napoleon, who handed it over – without reading it – to General Monge, who on 3 July 1815 deposited it in the French Institut, where it is kept to this very day. Napoleon himself read an abridged French copy when he returned from Egypt. Another abridged version of the text had been translated into English before 1803³³ by an anonymous translator who firmly believed that Bonaparte's Egyptian campaign was the execution of this 'operative top secret plan' which had been kept in Versailles since 1672. The translator overlooked the fact that the full memorandum had been kept

³⁰ Leibnitz, *Projet*, 29–299. A short version of the proposal was sent to Versailles already in 1671, a year before the full version was submitted. But Leibnitz himself did not gain access to the French king: *ibid.*, 'Introduction', pp. 1–lxviii.

³¹ A similar treatise, advocating a utilitarian interpretation of the Crusades, was written seventy-five years later (in 1747) by Dominique Jauna, an adviser to Marie Thérèse d'Autriche. The second volume of Jauna's book contains reflections on the means needed for a new conquest of Egypt. See Jauna, 1747.

³² Leibnitz, *Projet*, 35–37.

³³ Leibnitz, *Summary*.

for over a century in Hanover, the city of origin of the English royal house, and during all those years Englishmen could have had access to it.³⁴

Leibnitz regarded the Crusades not as a failure but as a legitimate manner of thinking that could influence and shape contemporary and future life; Robertson conceptualised this way of thinking; and the French Academy, in its guidelines for the competition of 1808, went one step further by totally ignoring the ethical aspects which had dominated the historiography of the Crusades since the thirteenth century. For the academicians, the Crusades were just another – yet very important – phase in the development of European culture.

EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY CHANGES: ROMANTICISM, CATHOLICISM, AND COUNTER-MOVEMENTS

Students of Crusader historiography tend to ascribe the new positive perceptions of the Crusades to the Romantic literature of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It is certainly true that the popular Romantic approach contributed greatly to a better interpretation of the Middle Ages and chivalry in general and of the Crusades in particular, and that the romances, novels, and poems written in the quasi-medieval *genre troubadour* had much influence upon the scholarly thinking of the early nineteenth century.³⁵ Already in the late eighteenth century, writers who dreamt of a world dominated by the sword, chivalry, and faith, and composers who created music and librettos based on Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* and on the personal courage of Richard the Lionheart, paved the way for a conceptual reinterpretation of the Crusades.³⁶ This Romantic wave reached its apogee with the publication of Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* in 1819,³⁷ his *Tales of the Crusaders* (which included both *The Talisman*, featuring Richard the Lionheart and Saladin as central characters, and *The Betrothed*) in 1825, and his *Count Robert of Paris* in 1831, several decades

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ See Dakyns, 1973, 1–28. For a general discussion of attitudes towards the Middle Ages, see also Estève, 1923–24, 353–83; Lanson, 1926; Aubert, 1928, 23–48.

³⁶ Gluck's *Armide* is based essentially on Tasso's account of the First Crusade as appears in his *Gerusalemme Liberata*, published already in 1581. Rossini's *Armide*, first performed in 1817, and Brahms' dramatic cantata *Rinaldo* are both based on the same story. André Grétry (1741–1813) composed the music for *Richard Coeur de Lion* as early as 1784. The romance was written in the early 1770s and was first performed in Paris in 1785. It was freely translated and adapted in England, Italy, Germany, and Holland. The words were by M. J. Sedaine. For the English translation, see Grétry, 1872. Voltaire himself wrote *Tancrède* in 1760 and *Zaire* in 1728.

³⁷ *Ivanhoe* was also eventually turned into an opera by both Rossini and Arthur Sullivan.

after the publication of William Robertson's book and many years after the competition in France.

The Romantic authors perceived the Middle Ages as a world which applied directly and personally to themselves and their own contemporaries; to an ever-growing extent, the 'age of chivalry' became a part of the emblematic collective memory. Simultaneously with this development, the belief that only stories with a medieval background could stir dormant emotions in the heart of men gained continuously wider acceptance. Literature set in the Middle Ages, wrote Madame de Staël, is 'the body of literature whose roots lie in our own land; it is the only one which is able to gain strength and flourish anew, [a literature] that is expressive of our religion, that reminds us of our history'. The Middle Ages, she claimed, greatly enriched the range of human emotions, adding an entire spectrum of emotions unknown in antiquity such as melancholy, the manner in which women were treated, courtly love, and more.³⁸ If such emotions emerge anew, wrote Mme de Staël, literature will once again be able to fill its ancient role and to be what it used to be.³⁹ Similar sentiments were expressed by Sismondi:

Our manners, our education, the moving episodes of our history, and . . . the narratives of our youth lead us again and again towards the age and customs of chivalry. Anything that is related to it [i.e., the age of chivalry] stirs emotional chords in our hearts, while anything connected to the mythological periods and to Antiquity relate only to memory.

Thus did the Middle Ages replace the heritage of the classical world as the major source of inspiration. Though the latter was the bearer of universal aesthetic criteria, it lacked any significance for the individual or the community, nor did it carry any important values.⁴⁰ Châteaubriand added an ideological and theological aspect to the prevalent penchant for romantic chivalry and troubadour poetry in his *Génie du christianisme*, first published in 1802. He describes the code of chivalry and the Gothic cathedrals as the fulfilment of the Catholic Christian ideal. In his book he depicts a world of picturesque pseudo-medieval ruins of the type which

³⁸ Staël, Mme de, 1813, I, 250–51.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴⁰ Simonde de Sismondi, 1813 iv, 261; see also Simonde de Sismondi, iv, 256–57: 'Ce sont les sentimens (*sic!*), les opinions, les vertus et les préjugés du moyen âge; c'est cette nature du bon vieux temps à laquelle toutes nos habitudes nous rattachent; en opposition avec l'antiquité héroïque'; for the English translation of Sismondi, see Sismondi, vol. IV, 246–47; Hugo, 1964, I, 341 ('La Bande Noire', 1823); Bray, 1963, 60.

was also popular in the paintings of Turner and when he refers to them the time gap between present and past does not exist:

There are no ruins which have such a picturesque character as these [medieval] ruins . . . Their gothic architecture is grand and sombre, like God in Sinai, whose memory they perpetuate . . . The wind blows through the ruins, whose innumerable days become like a pipe through which its lamentations escape. . .⁴¹

Châteaubriand created what in France is termed 'the cult of the ruins'. He believed that ruins of ancient buildings, by their very existence, create a sense of morality in nature, and that churches and their spires played a special moral role in the creation of the post-pagan landscape. He believed that all men are secretly attracted to ruined buildings and enchanted by them. Châteaubriand's writing came after many long years when France had been the scene of revolutionary vandalism; people were attentive to criticism of the destruction wrought on Gothic architecture and to the sentiments which such acts of destruction aroused.

Nevertheless, one would have to admit that Châteaubriand exerted only indirect influence on Crusader historiography, for he never directly dealt with the Crusades. Even in the itinerary of his journey to the Holy Land he mentions them only as part of that country's history.⁴² All this notwithstanding, he contributed greatly to the moulding of those Catholic concepts which formed the basis for the renewed glorification of the Middle Ages and to the shaping of the views of French Catholic historians.

Victor Hugo, following in the footsteps of Châteaubriand, began to refer to medieval people as 'our fathers', to medieval churches as 'the churches in which our mothers prayed', and to medieval castles as 'places in which our ancestors fought'.⁴³ Following Châteaubriand, medieval Romanticism, at least in France, also took on political implications: it was royalist, because the medieval knights were believed to have been loyal to the king,⁴⁴ and it was conservative and Catholic in nature. Romantic authors and admirers of the Middle Ages yearned for a return to the glorious past, characterised by absolute loyalty to altar and throne. As

⁴¹ Châteaubriand, *Génie*, I, 1966, 44: 'Il n'est aucune ruine d'une effet plus pittoresque que ces débris: . . . leur architecture gothique a quelque chose de grand et sombre, comme le Dieu de Sinai, dont elle perpetue le souvenir . . . Le vent circule dans les ruines, et leurs innombrables jours deviennent autant de tuyaux d'ou s'échappent des plaintes: l'orgue avait jadis moins de soupirs sous ces voutes religieuses.'

⁴² Châteaubriand, *Travels*, 1812, see also Châteaubriand, *Génie*, 1966, part iii, book I, ch. 8.

⁴³ Hugo, *Œuvres*, 'La Bande Noire', I, 341.

⁴⁴ Gossman, 1968, 283–85; Dakyns, 1973, 4.

early as 1822, the Société Royale des Bonnes-Lettres, of which Victor Hugo was a member, adopted the threefold pledge of loyalty to 'God, the King, and women'.⁴⁵ Thus, in that decade, romanticism and monarchism laid the foundations for a political platform which combined the two. True, the French Revolution had led to a decline in the *genre troubadour*, suspected of being too closely identified with the old regime, but from the period of the Restoration royalist Romanticism regained its former popularity in France, while the image of the Middle Ages as an ideal period shone even brighter than before.

We may say, therefore, that a positive attitude to the Crusades fed upon at least three sources: the pre-colonialist view expressed by Leibnitz, pointing to the economic advantages and the honour that would be the lot of the European nations which would once again conquer outposts in the Levant; the 'indirect influence' theory of Robertson, who claimed that European civilisation had gained from its contacts with higher Eastern cultures; and Romanticism, which began to attribute loftier moral values to the Middle Ages.

The rise of a positive view of the Crusades did not bring in its wake the complete disappearance of earlier negative ethical assessments. The viewpoint which rejected the Crusades on moral grounds, too, found many supporters at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and it forms part of the Protestant and Catholic discourse to this very day. A characteristic example of this tendency are the delegations of Europeans who in 1999 – the 900th anniversary of the conquest of Jerusalem during the First Crusade – sought the forgiveness of the Jewish people for the massacres perpetrated by the Crusaders on their way to the Holy Land. But the transformations which the discourse on the Crusades had undergone were such that only a few Israelis understood why and what they were being asked to forgive.

In any case, the change in attitude towards the Crusades which had led to their being presented in a positive light posed a challenge to those nineteenth-century authors who continued to attack the ethical background of the Crusades. This, for example, is what Catholic priest Joseph Berington wrote in a book dealing with medieval literature:

If it be still insisted that some benefits in domestic, civil, or scientific knowledge were necessarily communicated to Europe, either by the expeditions themselves, or, at least, owing to our long abode in the east, I ask, what those benefits were?

⁴⁵ Bray, 1963, 60.

Or how it happens, that the literary and intellectual aspect of Europe exhibited no striking changes till other causes, wholly unconnected with the Crusades, were brought into action? I believe, then, that these expeditions were utterly sterile with respect to the arts, to learning, and to every moral advantage, and that they neither retarded the progress of the invading enemy, nor, for a single day, the fate of the eastern empire.⁴⁶

In the second decade of the nineteenth century Charles Mills also published works critical of the supposedly positive contribution of the Crusades.

Mills, a lawyer and member of a family of seagoing physicians, did not practise law due to ill health. He published books dealing with the history of Islam and of medieval chivalry in which he tried to return the discourse on the Crusades to its moral point of departure. He was not averse to using the most pejorative terms in order to express his ethical reservations about the Crusades:

No religious wars have ever been so long, so sanguinary, and so destructive . . . It was not for the conversion of people, or the propagation of opinions, but for the redemption of the sepulchre of Christ, and the destruction of the enemies of God, that the crimson standard was unfurled . . . The flame of war spread from one end of Europe to the other, for the deliverance of the Holy land from a state which was called pollution; and the floodgates of fanaticism were unlocked for the savage and iniquitous purpose of extermination.⁴⁷

Mills found no theological justification for the conquest: Jerusalem was not destroyed by God in order to be rebuilt by Christians; the Holy Land is not the Promised Land of the Christians; and even coming to the aid of the 'Greeks', who were certainly in danger, cannot justify the extent of the violence. He was revolted by the claim that events as immoral as the Crusades could be of even indirect advantage to the countries of Europe. The very opposite is true: 'The Crusades encouraged the most horrible violences of fanaticism.' From a reading of Mills' book we learn that he possessed a copy of the volume by Heeren, one of the prizewinners in the competition conducted by the Académie Française, and refuted his arguments one by one.

Mills' attack is not directed solely at the 'utilitarian' views put forward by Robertson and his followers; he is also critical of the Romantic view of chivalry, which developed at that same time, painting the Crusades in mystic and fantastic colours. Not a noble defence of ladies motivated the

⁴⁶ Berington, 1814, 269.

⁴⁷ Mills, 1820, II, 332; for similar ideas see Haken, 1808–20.

Crusades but the will of barbarian and fanatical destruction.⁴⁸ He brings his criticism of the Crusades to an end by citing a few lines from a poem by Edmund Burke:

The blood of man should never be shed but to redeem the blood of man.
It is well shed for our family, for our friends, for our God, for our kind.
The rest is vanity, the rest is crime.⁴⁹

The views expressed by Mills and Haken, however, were doomed to failure. For even had it been possible to dim the glamour of Romanticism, which painted the Middle Ages in general, and the Crusades in particular, in glowing colours, and even had it been possible to counter the claim – so widespread from the mid-eighteenth until the early nineteenth centuries – that the Crusades had also had beneficial aspects, the nationalist argumentation which slowly but surely gained control of the European historical discourse since the 1830s was much more powerful and attractive. It succeeded in overshadowing all the reasoned arguments that preceded its rise and to fundamentally transform the nature of Crusader historiography.

The introduction of the nationalist discourse into historical writing led to the eventual transformation of the history of the Crusades from a single pan-European episode into several parallel narratives, each of which served a different nation in the process of creating its national identity.

⁴⁸ Mills, II, 348–51.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 374.

CHAPTER 2

The narrative of the Crusades and the nationalist discourse

THE BIRTH OF THE FRENCH NARRATIVE: JOSEPH-FRANÇOIS
MICHAUD (1767–1839)

It is rather surprising that none of the scholars who dealt with the Crusades in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries made any special reference to the national origins of the Crusaders. Even the participants in the competition organised by the Académie Française, who found that the Crusades influenced almost every imaginable sphere of human life, did not maintain that they were connected to this or that nationality, or that the Crusades should be studied within a national context.

The beginnings of such a nationalist discourse on the Crusades can be traced to the late 1830s by comparing texts appearing in the early 1820s with similar ones published twenty years later. Joseph-François Michaud's monumental *Histoire des Croisades* is a perfect case in point. The first edition of this popular work was published between 1817 and 1822; four further editions appeared during the period of the Restoration, five more during that of the July Monarchy, and an additional ten editions before the end of the nineteenth century. Michaud did not update the later editions, but in the late 1830s, together with his devoted friend Jean Joseph François Poujoulat, who a few years earlier had accompanied him on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he wrote an abridged version 'for the young generation', published in 1839, shortly after Michaud's death.¹ Though most chapters of the abridgement are based on the *Histoire*, closer scrutiny reveals that the historiographical outlook had undergone substantial change. Whereas Michaud's full work presented a pan-European, Catholic, and monarchist viewpoint, the abridged version was first and foremost a French nationalist narrative.

¹ Michaud and Poujoulat, 1876, *Jeunesse*.

Michaud was a conservative monarchist who began his career as a journalist, at first on the staff of the *Gazette Universelle* and later in the *Quotidienne*, which he founded. He was sentenced to death for openly defending the royalist cause, but having managed to flee, he spent time in exile and when he was back in France he was sentenced to three years in jail.² He maintained his Catholic views and, after a short period as a Bonapartist, he continued to support the Bourbons, was elected to the Académie Française in 1813, and later became a member of parliament.

Michaud's interest in the Crusades began almost accidentally. He was asked to write an introduction to a historical novel by Sophie Ristaud (1773–1807), better known in French literary salons under her *nom de plume* of Madame Cottin, which was about to appear under the imprint of the publishing house established by Michaud and his brother Louis Gabriel. The introduction grew into an ambitious project that filled ninety pages and led Michaud to undertake a comprehensive study of the Crusades.³

Michaud's early views on the Crusades can be ascertained from his introduction to Mme Cottin's novel, various chapters in his *Histoire*, and also from the historical perspective in which he placed the Crusades and which is indicative of his historiographical outlook. Michaud analysed the reasons that had led his predecessors to condemn the Crusades and concluded that these were based entirely on their failure. Had the Crusades succeeded, he said, they would have been better appreciated by later historians. 'Let us imagine', he wrote, 'that Egypt and Syria would have been Christian, that the inhabitants of East and West would have proceeded together towards Civilisation . . . [Then] there would have been no reservations about the importance of the Crusades.'⁴ Michaud's ideal world was that of first-century AD Rome – one law, one language, open seas, and accessible roads. French would replace Latin, but apart from that his ideal world was actually a pan-European Roman-like one. He saw the Crusades as a momentous collision between East and West,⁵ an undertaking great enough to cause the common people to abandon

² For a detailed description of his escape see Robson, 1881, vii–xiv.

³ Richard, 2002, 3.

⁴ Michaud, 1822, vol. IV, book 17, 1822, pp. 162–66.

⁵ 'L'histoire du moyen âge n'a pas de plus imposant spectacle que les guerres entreprises pour la conquête de la Terre-Sainte. Quel tableau, en effet, que celui des peuples de l'Asie et de l'Europe armés les uns contre les autres, de deux religions s'attaquant réciproquement et se disputant l'empire du monde . . . Tous les peuples abandonnent leurs intérêts, leurs rivalités, et ne voyent plus sur la terre qu'une seule contrée digne de l'ambition des conquérants.' Ibid.

their private interests and 'petty rivalries' and rally together for the redemption of the Holy Land.

Like many of his contemporaries, Michaud was eager to look into the past in order to find new meaning for the present.⁶ He was deeply influenced by Châteaubriand's *Génie du christianisme* (1802) and envisioned a monarchist and religious future symbolically organised around the king and the church. The followers of Châteaubriand, says Ceri Crossley, 'looked back to an idealized vision of the Middle Ages' believing that the 'society of the future . . . [would] return to a lost past . . . [and that] the future will be the perpetuation of the past'.⁷ Unlike Châteaubriand, Michaud was more devoted to the monarchist cause than to his Catholic religion.⁸ For him the main political objective of history was glorification of the monarchy and the return of the *ancien régime*. Châteaubriand nevertheless appreciated Michaud's contribution to the monarchist cause, and in the eulogy he delivered at Michaud's funeral on 1 October 1839 placed the *Histoire* on the same level as his own *Génie du Christianisme*: 'The *Génie du Christianisme* and the *Histoire des Croisades*, these famous double representations of ancient religious and monarchist France, are present at the same time for the last time.'

Despite Michaud's belief that the French nation had played a very important role in the history of the Crusades and his deep conviction that 'our fathers, nobility, and kings' had benefited from the *gloire* of the Crusades, he did not claim – at least not in the four volumes of his great work – that the Crusades were a French undertaking. He was also inclined to agree with the view which maintained that at least some of the Crusaders were not motivated solely by moral reasons. For example, he conceded that some of those who joined the expeditions were serfs wishing to escape their lowly status and that others were debtors trying to evade repaying the sums they owed or warriors who aspired to conquests and spoils. Nevertheless, he always emphasised the importance of religious belief and the desire to block Muslim expansion among the motives that led men to set out on the Crusades.⁹

Nationalist discourse, about to become Michaud's greatest conceptual contribution to the historiography of the Crusades, appeared only in his later writings, during the 1830s. Some hint of his future nationalistic

⁶ Mellon, 1958; Munholland, 1994, 144–45; Gooch, 1949, 156; Gossman, 1990, 252.

⁷ Crossley, 1993, 8; see also Charlton, 1984, 33–75.

⁸ Munholland, 1994, 149.

⁹ Michaud, vol. 1, 510, 522, 524; cf. Richard, 2002, 3.

approach can however already be detected in his *Bibliographie des Croisades* (1822) in which he claims that all *historians* of the First Crusade belonged to the French nation.¹⁰ But apart from this, his nationalistic approach appeared for the first time only in the abridged version of the *Histoire*, co-authored with Poujoulat, which was published after Michaud's death in 1839 and in the sixth edition of his book, which also appeared posthumously in 1841.¹¹

This is how Michaud and Poujoulat describe the Crusades in the version intended for young readers:

It was France, the country of intelligence and courage, which gave the signal for the Crusades and led the rest of Europe along the route to the Holy Sepulchre. *The Crusades were entirely French wars* [*Les croisades furent des guerres toutes françaises*], and these sacred expeditions were the most heroic chapter in *our history*. It was France which furnished the greatest number of illustrious warriors for these gigantic combats beyond the sea; it had the honour of providing the kings for the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem . . . Our country, by placing itself seven centuries ago at the head of the Crusader Revolution, was established as the defender of modern civilisation, and created the intellectual empire which it never lost. (emphasis added – R. E.)¹²

Their nationalistic approach surfaces once again in the two authors' interpretation of contemporary politics: not only were the Crusades a French endeavour, but recent French colonial acquisitions could also be labelled 'crusades'. 'In our times', they wrote, 'the struggle between light and darkness was renewed on the same coasts. The conquest of Algeria in 1830 and our recent struggles in Africa are nothing less than new crusades. If Saint Louis' expedition to Tunis had been successful, there would have been no need for Charles X to send his armies to the coasts of Africa.'¹³

This nationalist and colonialist discourse is repeated when Michaud and Poujoulat deal with Napoleon's expedition to Egypt:

Before the end of the last century the world witnessed the departure of a French army from the same ports towards the Orient. The French warriors of this glorious expedition defeated the Muslims at the Pyramids, in Tiberias, at Thabor; only Jerusalem, which was so close, did not cause their heart to beat,

¹⁰ Michaud, 1822, 8.

¹¹ For the French nature of the Crusades see Michaud, *Histoire*, 6th edn, 1841, vi, 160–67. For the comparatively marginal role of other European nations in these expeditions see, *ibid.*, 176–96. For the nineteenth-century French expeditions as modern Crusades, see *ibid.*, 370–72.

¹² Michaud and Poujoulat, *Jeunesse*, 10.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 11.

did not even gain their attention. Everything was thus changed in the opinions governing the West.¹⁴

The change in outlook is striking, but when did it occur?

Kim Munholland¹⁵ has pointed out the great extent to which Michaud was affected by the expedition to Algeria and the July Revolution. Michaud happened to be in Toulon on his way to the Holy Land just when the army of Charles X (who generously contributed 25,000 francs to Michaud's pilgrimage, thus turning it into a quasi-official one) set sail for Algeria from the same port, and it was there that Michaud, the great supporter of the Bourbons, met the *maréchal* of France, Comte Louis Bourmont. They were well acquainted from the time of their joint imprisonment in the Temple. The *maréchal* invited his old friend to dine with him, and while admiring the imposing fleet of 60 warships and 1200 cargo ships they discussed the unique destiny which had brought them both to launch *crusades*.¹⁶ This is the first instance in which Michaud defines both his own pilgrimage and the conquest of Algeria as 'crusades'. But Michaud's innovation goes much further: he combines France's Algerian campaign and his personal Holy Land pilgrimage with the new French nationalism, on the one hand, and the medieval Crusades, on the other. The colonialist conquest of Algeria is not merely an act of French patriotism; it is also a direct continuation of the history of the Crusades. Michaud's Catholicism, too, is both a direct continuation of the Crusades and a patriotic act.

Michaud refers to himself as a true crusader, about to reconquer the Holy Land in the name of the new Christianity. He uses both his own *Histoire des Croisades* and Châteaubriand's itinerary as guides to Palestine. While travelling through the Holy Land he constantly confuses history and reality. Everything reminds him of the Crusades: the roads are exactly the same, as are the sites; even the insects remind him of those that afflicted Richard the Lionheart on his way to Arsuf. When he visits 'Athlit it is Jacques of Vitry, and not Michaud himself, who describes the castle.¹⁷ He combines patriotic feelings with deep historical knowledge to create

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 367–68.

¹⁵ Munholland, who otherwise had no interest in the history of the Crusades, noted the emergence of the nationalist discourse in the writings of Michaud, see Munholland, 1994, 144–65. Students of Crusader historiography, among them Sibbery and Tyerman, ignored the emergence of this nationalist discourse.

¹⁶ Michaud and Poujoulat, *Correspondance*, 3. Michaud described this meeting in his first letter home, written on 27 May 1830 on board the *Loiret*.

¹⁷ Michaud and Poujoulat, *Correspondance*, IV, letter xciii, 146–58; letter xciv, 190.

the new nationalist interpretation of the Crusades. When he reaches Jerusalem and is ordained 'a knight of the Holy Sepulchre'¹⁸ he deplores the fact that the French people take no real interest in Jerusalem:

This country fell into such oblivion that a French army, as big as those of the Crusades, went to Egypt, bringing its conquests to the very coasts of Syria without even pronouncing the name of Jerusalem. Nobody even had the idea to cross the mountains of Judea. Scholars, to whom we owe our deepest esteem, studied Egypt and all of her monuments . . . But there is not even one line on Jerusalem and its antiquities.¹⁹

Michaud bridges the gap of centuries to justify his own ideological and historiographical objectives. Modern French conquests and contemporary French colonialism, he claims, are nothing more than a continuation of the Crusades. Those too had been French colonialist conquests, though differently garbed. The major difference between the Crusades and the present expeditions lies in the fact that the modern ones completely disregard the religious and ideological motives of the medieval Crusades. When Jerusalem plays a central role in the modern crusades, the return to the past shall be complete.

Upon returning from his pilgrimage, Michaud, together with Poujoulat, wrote the abridged version of his *Histoire* embodying his new nationalist understanding of the Crusades. The same Michaud who in *Histoire* had dreamt of a pan-European Roman-like world was the first to transform the narrative of the Crusades into a chapter of French nationalist history. From that moment the Crusades, which for centuries had been so clearly viewed as a pan-European religious endeavour, became a disputed chapter in the proliferating histories of the newly created nation-states.

THE BIRTH OF THE GERMAN NARRATIVE: HEINRICH VON
SYBEL (1817–1895)

Another mid-nineteenth-century contribution to the historiography of the Crusades was made by German scholar Heinrich von Sybel. A pupil of Ranke, Sybel tended to ascribe the positive interpretations of the Crusades to the newly established philological methodology of treating historical texts, and most specifically to the seven-volume *Geschichte der*

¹⁸ Not an uncommon ceremony for pilgrims of a higher social status. Châteaubriand was ordained in a similar way.

¹⁹ Michaud and Poujoulat, *Correspondance*, IV, 243.

Kreuzzüge by Friedrich Wilken, published between 1807 and 1832.²⁰ Wilken's critical reading of the texts, Sybel believed, demonstrated the positive aspects of the Crusades to the German readership: 'Friedrich Wilken', he wrote, 'undertook [the challenge] to replace feelings by historical description and to portray the Crusades . . . as they were depicted in the writing of contemporary chroniclers.'²¹ Consequently, 'the . . . feelings (of the Germans at least) had reverted with affectionate enthusiasm towards the Middle Ages'.²² Sybel divided the historiography of the Crusades into two stages: a period of incompetent reading of the sources which led to a negative perception, and a period of critical reading which led to a positive perception of the same events, an approach widely accepted by modern scholars.²³ Sybel, a devoted and militant anti-Catholic, did not lay the blame for negative assessments of the Crusades entirely on the Protestants, but he did, instead, blame the papacy and the Catholic Church for the failure: 'What caused the Crusades to fail was the heat of religious excitement.'²⁴ In a book on the First Crusade, published in 1841, he ignored the nationalist approach, which had already been introduced by Michaud in the 1830s and was later to be adopted by nineteenth-century political thinking.

It is only in the 1850s that one can discern a nationalist approach in Sybel's historical writing. He had in the meanwhile become involved in national politics and the struggle against Catholicism. In a pamphlet dealing with the politics of the Rhineland, which he published in 1847, he wrote: 'To be an ultramontanist and a German patriot are two contradictory concepts. It is impossible to serve those two masters, the pope and the king, at one and the same time. One has to choose between them.'²⁵ When he wrote that pamphlet he was already a professor at Marmbourg, preaching pro-Prussian and liberal ideas, though his conception of freedom is unlike that which prevails today. Freedom comes about from the power of the state, which results when all citizens patriotically fulfil all the obligations imposed by the state.²⁶

²⁰ Sybel, 1841.

²¹ Wilken, 1807–32.

²² *Ibid.*, 168–69.

²³ Sibbery states that 'the overall picture was not as monochrome as some later historians have suggested and certainly it is too simplistic to say that all adopted a romanticized view of a glorious chivalric enterprise', Sibbery, 2000, 38. Tyerman emphasises the role of Protestant thinking by claiming that 'much of the impetus for studying the crusades as a distinct historical phenomenon came from Protestants', Tyerman, 1998, 105.

²⁴ Sybel, 1858, 93–94.

²⁵ Guillard, 1900, 150–226, esp. 159.

²⁶ Sybel, Reiches, 1, 31.

In 1848–50, after the completion of his *Geschichte des ersten Kreuzzuges*, he even abandoned his university post in order to support the hopes for a greater Germany, looking for a true leader who, he believed, was needed to accomplish such a task. In fact he was one of the first historians to comment on the role of the leader in shaping history.²⁷ He became increasingly convinced of these ideas as work progressed for some twenty years on his magnum opus, a history of the French Revolution. Sybel had managed to receive permission from Napoleon III to consult French archives and continued his research in London, Brussels, the Hague, and Berlin. He was motivated by a desire to do away once and for all with the halo of glory that enveloped the French Revolution.²⁸ Simultaneously, his interest in the Crusades deepened.

In a series of lectures delivered in Munich in 1855 he tried to draw lessons from the Crusades for the current needs of the German people and about the nature of the ideal leader. It is evident that his model was Friedrich Barbarossa, whom he described as follows:

He was born a ruler in the highest sense of the word; he possessed all the attributes of power; bold yet cautious, courageous and enduring, energetic and methodical, he towered proudly above all who surrounded him and had the highest conception of his princely calling. But his ideas were beyond his time . . . he was made to feel the penalty of running counter to the inclination of the present generation.

Sybel identified with Barbarossa's struggle against the papacy and his efforts to build a unified state:

It seemed to him unbearable that the emperor, who was extolled by the world as the defender of the right and the fountain-head of law, should be forced to bow before unruly vassals or unlimited ecclesiastical power. He had, chiefly from the study of Roman law, conceived the idea of a state complete within itself and strong in the name of the common desire, a complete contrast to the existing condition of Europe, where all the monarchies were breaking up, and the crowned priest reigned supreme over a crowd of petty princes. Under these circumstances he appeared, deep in the Middle Ages, foreshadowing modern thoughts like a fresh mountain breeze dispersing the incense-laden atmosphere of the time . . . So commanding was the energy, so powerful the earnestness and so inexhaustible the resources of his nature, that he was as terrible to his foes on the last day as on the first, passionless and pitiless, never distorted by cruelty, and never melted by pity, an iron defender of his imperial right.²⁹

²⁷ Guillaud, 1900, 175–76.

²⁸ Sybel, *French Revolution*.

²⁹ Sybel, 1858, 93–95, see also 78–79.

Sybel exemplifies a strategy which later became the most common way to 'nationalise' the Crusades: the adoption of Crusader leaders as national heroes and the adoption of the idea of statehood for the Frankish states.³⁰ The French manner of nationalising the Crusades *per se* could not be imitated, at least not at such an early stage in the process of creating nationalist narratives.

OTHER NATIONALIST NARRATIVES

The Belgians tried to combine the methods of Michaud and Sybel. Already in 1826 the Academy of Ghent announced an essay competition devoted to the role of Belgians in the Crusades. Belgian Crusaders were defined as those who had come from the territory which, from 1831, constituted the Belgian nation-state.³¹ Belgian national identity had already begun to take shape during the revolt against the Austrian Habsburg monarchy in Brabant in the 1790s.³² Three elements characterised this newly created national identity, says Louis Vos: first, the wish to restore the old political, institutional, and religious order; second, a new interpretation of 'Belgian history' based on a personality cult of the leaders as well as on the introduction of insignia such as the Brabant heraldic colours and the lion as symbols of strength and independence; and third and most important, Catholicism. The Catholic faith, the most prominent marker of this new nation and that which distinguished it from Holland, became the 'mobilising principle' for the nation's cause.

The study of the 'Belgian Crusaders' predated the separation of Belgium from Holland and the creation of the Belgian national state in 1831; it also heralded the appropriation, fifteen years later, of Godfrey of Bouillon as a Belgian national hero. Godfrey's origins in the house of Ardennes, a territory that formed a part of the future Belgium, and more importantly his reputation as the most pious Catholic king of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, rendered him perfect for the role. Godfrey had already become a legend during the Middle Ages, mainly because of

³⁰ Sybel, 1871.

³¹ Two works shared the first prize; both were submitted on 2 October 1826 and had the same title: *Responsio ad quaestionem: Quam partem habuerunt Belgae in bellis sacris et quosnam fructus ex iis perceperunt*. The Academy published both in the same volume of the *Annales academiae Gandavensis*, Ghent, 1825–26, each thesis being paginated separately. Their authors were Ludovicus P. Mortier and Petrus Cornelius Van den Velden. Both relied on primary sources and quoted extensively from the two prizewinners of the French competition, Regembogen and Heeren, as well as from Châteaubriand, Michaud, and Robertson.

³² Vos, 1993, 128–47; Stengers, 1981, 46–60.

his election immediately after the conquest of Jerusalem during the First Crusade, on 15 July 1099, as the ruler of the new settlement or 'Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri'.

Medieval chronicles depicted him as the bravest and most Catholic ruler of the kingdom. This legendary 'Chevalier au cygne', whose only fault was his over-long devotions, was perfectly suited to become the national hero of the Catholic kingdom of Belgium.³³

Barbarossa as the model of a national hero differs from that of Godfrey; whereas Godfrey was Catholic, pious, and brave, Barbarossa was German, anti-Catholic, and above all a leader. But the rich repertoire of the rehabilitated Crusades supplied enough personalities for any type of national hero.

Richard the Lionheart, a national hero of England, was yet another model. Richard's life had become legendary long before the nineteenth century, and he himself had been transformed into a symbol of chivalry and bravery already in the late Middle Ages.³⁴ But Richard was also one of the first medieval characters to gain the attention of the romantic historical writing of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and was the subject of two of Walter Scott's major romantic novels. Richard was both an ancient hero and a new, romantic one.

His lengthy career as the legendary *English* king is astonishing. Richard spent less time in England than any other monarch of that country, spoke no English, and ruled over much more than England. He was not even born in England – Normandy was his father's birthplace, and Gasconne his mother's. But his personal biography was forgotten and in late medieval legends he was already depicted as the very opposite of the French stereotype.³⁵ The romantic-nationalist trend, born during the late years of the eighteenth century, was already apparent in the English adaptation of Sedaine's *Richard Coeur de Lion* in which he is represented as fighting 'for liberty and Old England'. As might be expected, the 'English' interpretation of his character reached its apogee in the mid-nineteenth century, since by the end of the 1830s he was well on the way to being portrayed as an English national hero. One of his biographers, William E. Aytoun, claimed as early as 1840 that French historians had

³³ For the debate over Godfrey's birthplace see Exauvillez, 1842; Prévault, 1849; Barbe, 1855, 1858; Mgr. de Ram, 1857 (Mgr De Ram, the rector of the Catholic University of Louvain located Godfrey's birthplace in Brabant, whereas Barbe believed it to be in Boulogne Sur-Mer); Aubé, 1985, 353–88.

³⁴ Broughton, 1966; Gillingham, 1992, 51–69.

³⁵ Paris, 1897, 353–93.

'stigmatised' Richard for being 'cruel, deceitful and treacherous', the reason for 'heaping such abuses' on Richard being his 'opposition to France'. 'Even when France was at the height of her wildest frenzy', he maintains, '[such opposition] has always been considered by [the French] as an enormous and unpardonable offence . . .'.³⁶

Despite his French origin, Richard was accepted as a national hero and his equestrian statue was exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Two years later the same statue, cast in bronze, was placed 'in Westminster Palace Yard, between the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey . . . in solitary splendour . . . [Richard Coeur de Lion] . . . of all kings, is the one to be celebrated at a spot which lies at the very centre of English history'.³⁷ At about the same time, a reader wrote to *The Times* suggesting that the Plantagenet tombs should be moved from Fontevraud to England in fair exchange for the return of Napoleon's body to France. What Napoleon was to France, Richard (and in fact the whole Plantagenet dynasty) was to England.³⁸

Richard and Godfrey were not 'invented' heroes. Their legendary biographies were well known and admired, but they became exemplary heroes and their biographies were adopted by the machinery of the newly born nation-states to enhance nationalistic ideas dear to the leaders of these states.

CRUSADER NATIONAL NARRATIVES AND THE GEOGRAPHY OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

The Romantic nationalists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries propagated the idea that national character [*Volksgeist*], which had already developed in ancient times, was the main factor influencing the history and destiny of a nation.³⁹ The recent deconstructivist trend in the study of national movements has overturned this thesis; it does not analyse national history as a reflection of a mythological 'national character' nor accept national character to be a fundamental element in the crystallisation of the nation. Instead, nationality is considered to be an awareness that develops together with the realisation of nationalist aspirations, an anachronistic projection of ideals created by the nation-state and the movement that spawned it. Thus it is not the Italian identity and

³⁶ Aytoun, 1840, 344–45.

³⁷ Gillingham, 1992, 51.

³⁸ *The Times*, 10 June 1853, as quoted by Gillingham, 1992, 60.

³⁹ Nipperdey, 1983, 1–15.

'character' that created Italy, because there was no such thing before the establishment of the Italian state; it was the Italian state that created 'Italian identity'. The creation of such an identity involves the adoption of 'golden ages' which might suit the current needs of the nation and are glorified and presented as examples of the 'national character'.

The choice of the Crusades as such a 'golden age' and of leaders such as Richard the Lionheart, Godfrey of Bouillon, and Friedrich Barbarossa as national heroes only partially fits in with this general tendency. For many generations the Crusades were regarded as a narrative that did not belong to any specific nation, and their adoption by a specific national movement was not obvious.

National histories and national mythologies are geographically limited. Modern national 'golden ages' cannot be sought in epochs or events that occurred beyond the actual or desired boundaries of the nation-state. In other words, national 'golden ages' reflect the actual geography of the nation-state. A modern nation-state can regard any of the dynasties that ruled its territory as part of its own heritage, even if there was no ethnic, religious, or linguistic connection between the modern and the old. Thus modern Turkey could have chosen the Hittite, Ottoman, or Byzantine periods as its golden age and built its capital in Istanbul (Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman heritage) or Ankara (Hittite heritage), because all of these flourished within the geographic boundaries of modern Turkey. Any choice of a golden age or historic capital that is not currently included within the 'national space' (i.e., national borders) could be considered irredentist and lead to war with neighbouring countries. The history of a territory and the events that took place within its modern national boundaries can be regarded as a legitimate part of the nation's history. Space defines the borders of legitimate history.

Modern Turkey preferred not to have Istanbul as its capital because that city was permeated with Christian and Ottoman memories at odds with the new political ethos. They therefore chose Ankara, near the ancient capital of the Hittite empire. Hittite architectural styles influenced the new public buildings in Ankara, among them a museum of Hittite history. There are, of course, absolutely no ethnic, linguistic, or cultural connections between Hittite civilisation and the culture of post-Ottoman Turkey, the modern Turkish nation-state. But the fact that both existed in the same geographical territory legitimises the adoption by modern Turkey of the Hittite period as a historical golden age.

In 1833 the young Bavarian Prince Otto, son of the philhellene King Ludwig I, was crowned monarch of Greece. Otto transferred the capital

of the new Greek nation-state from Nafplion in the Peloponnese to Athens, despite stiff opposition from Greek public opinion. In 1834 the incumbent minister of the interior proposed postponing the decision on the choice of an official capital, claiming that only Constantinople, the glorious capital of the Byzantine empire, deserved that title. The role of the Greeks, he said, would be to expand the borders of the state until they included all former territories of the empire. Many agreed with him.⁴⁰ Eric Hobsbawm writes:

The real Greeks who took up arms for what turned out to be the formation of a new independent nation-state, did not talk ancient Greek any more than Italians talk Latin. They talked and wrote Demotic. Pericles, Aeschylus, Euripides and the glories of ancient Sparta and Athens meant little if anything to them, and insofar as they had heard of them they did not think of them as relevant. Paradoxically, they stood for Rome rather than Greece (*romaiosyne*), that is to say they saw themselves as heirs of the Christianized Roman Empire (i.e. Byzantium). They fought as Christians against Muslim unbelievers, as Romans against the Turkish dogs.

The choice of Athens as the capital of modern Greece was the result of the philhellenic romanticism of the intellectuals in the Greek diaspora.⁴¹

With the passage of time, the Greeks came to realise that the adoption of Constantinople as their capital and the Byzantine era as their golden age would lead to continuous conflict with Turkey, within whose boundaries Constantinople was located and for whom the Byzantine empire was part of its 'glorious national heritage', even though they preferred the Hittite heritage, at least in connection with the choice of a capital. In the end, modern Greece preferred the civilisation of classical Greece as its golden age, and Athens as its capital, despite the fact that in the 1830s only a handful of German and English philhellenes supported such a step.

History can therefore be added to the basic elements characteristic of modern national space. The border delineating such a space defines other characteristics of the nation-state: national responsibility for personal and national security, monetary and fiscal systems, customs regulations, criminal, civil, and traffic laws, etc. To these we can add symbolic features such as uniforms, flags, hymns, languages, and sources for a national history.

The Crusades suited many national movements which admired chivalry, Catholic piety, and the willingness to die for a common cause; furthermore, many nations identified with the memories of the Crusades

⁴⁰ Bastéa, 2000, 1–28.

⁴¹ Hobsbawm, 1990, 77.

mainly because of their 'Europeanness'. But the Crusades belonged to none of them. No nation could claim that the Crusades, which occurred outside its territory, were exclusively a part of its own history. The adoption of the Crusades as a 'golden era' by many of the rising national movements had to follow a preliminary stage marked by disintegration of the former common history and the creation of separate national identities. Only when the accepted *European* story ceased to exist and was replaced by national narratives was it possible to adopt either the Crusades *per se* as a golden age, or their leaders as national heroes. Nor could any national movement (except that of the French) claim a monopoly on the Crusades. The story was broken down into parallel geographic narratives, and each nation could only appropriate its own share. The Belgians could adopt Godfrey of Bouillon because he was born in a territory that was later incorporated into the Belgian state, just as the English could adopt Richard the Lionheart because he ruled the territory which was later to become part of the English national space – despite their personal biographies, which were neither 'Belgian' nor 'English'.

Michaud was the first to 'nationalise' the Crusades. Towards the end of his life he tried to appropriate the medieval expeditions and transform them into purely French episodes after having presented them as European enterprises in his multi-volume *Histoire*. Michaud was followed by Sybel, the Belgians, the English, and other nations which now portrayed their medieval leaders as national figures, and the Crusades as their national 'golden age'. Friedrich Barbarossa, Godfrey of Bouillon, Phillippe Auguste, Richard the Lionheart, St Louis – all of them reflected the creation of national myths during the nineteenth century, and all of them were used to transform the Crusades from a great moral event into a continuum of national mythological narratives.

The historiography of the Crusades is not the only pan-European theme which was reinterpreted into separate national narratives. The same holds true for the historiography of medieval architecture. Romanesque and Gothic styles, which until early in the nineteenth century were devoid of any distinctive national characteristics, became symbols of newly reborn national movements. Once again, the general 'European' narrative was first taken apart and then replaced by an alternative national interpretation of architectural development.⁴²

⁴² Bergdoll, 1996, 103–35; see also his chapter on 'Nationalism and stylistic debates in architecture', in Bergdoll, 2000, 139–70; see also Erland-Brandenburg, 1994.

CHAPTER 3

Nationalist discourse and Crusader archaeology

THE EXPROPRIATION OF CRUSADER ARCHAEOLOGY AND ARCHITECTURE BY GERMAN NATIONALISM

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the transformation of the story of the Crusades from a pan-European account into a national narrative, and from a resounding failure into a source of national pride, extended into the physical aspects of the Crusades as well. French scholars began to claim that not only were the expeditions an integral episode of French history, but that Crusader archaeological and architectural remains were proof that Frankish civilisation in the Levant was, in effect, an aspect of 'French culture'. Though it is true that German scholars who followed in the footsteps of their French counterparts did not claim that the Crusades were 'German', they too harnessed the popularity of the Crusades and Crusader archaeology to the wagon of German nationalism.

'Nationalisation' of Crusader architecture was part of a more widespread process by which medieval physical remains became integral components of different, and parallel, national narratives. From the early nineteenth century, for example, the Romanesque and Gothic styles, which until the late eighteenth century were considered universal and 'European', began to serve as physical insignia of the various national movements. 'Crusader architecture' underwent a similar transformation.¹

The earliest attempts to link nationalist ideology with 'national medieval architecture' are to be found in German nationalist writings of the early nineteenth century, particularly the works of Catholic historian Josef von Görres (1776–1848) and his disciples. Görres, whose portrait hung for years behind the desk of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, started out as an enlightened republican but later became a nationalist

¹ For the changes in the perception of medieval architecture see Bergdoll, 1996, 103–35; 2000, 139–70; Erland-Brandenburg (English trans.), 1–26.

writer who helped shape German national identity in its earliest stages.² With his organisational skill and leadership qualities, Görres managed to firmly establish the threefold connection between nationalism, Romanticism, and medieval 'German' architecture.³ He concentrated on the restoration and emphasising of the German character of Gothic cathedrals throughout Germany, transforming them into symbols of nascent German nationalism. The 'nationalisation' of medieval cathedrals began even earlier, during the 1770s. The first to be adored as a German cathedral was the Gothic cathedral in Strasbourg which already in the eighteenth century – before Görres' efforts – was the subject of popular admiration and considered a noble expression of the German spirit. This was due to the fact that Germans believed it had been constructed by a family of German architects and stonemasons, founded by Erwin von Steinbach (died 1318). After the visit of Goethe in 1770,⁴ the cathedral achieved almost mythical status as 'a German Cathedral' and Steinbach's grave, near Baden Baden, became a site of pilgrimage. The alleged German origin of the cathedral of Strasbourg contributed to the tendency to lend a nationalist hue to medieval architecture in general. The cathedral in Nürnberg received similar treatment towards the end of the eighteenth century, but during the Napoleonic wars the focus of nationalist attention in the sphere of architecture was transferred to the unfinished cathedral of Cologne.⁵

The fact that construction of the Cologne cathedral had never been completed was used by Görres to turn it into a symbol of German nationalism in general. The unfinished cathedral was a means of channeling nationalist energies towards a concrete objective – completion of a gigantic medieval 'German' undertaking. For Görres, the fact that the cathedral had been left incomplete for centuries was a sign that the Germans had turned their back on their culture and religion. This, he believed, is what had led to the collapse of the empire, and a change in their outlook would, in the final tally, lead to its restoration. In 1814 he wrote:

Germany will live in shame and degradation . . . until its inhabitants will return . . . [and] finish the undertaking, which they abandoned during the period of their

² Vanden Heuvel, 2001, xvii.

³ Similar connections between nationalism and archaeology had been made earlier, but Görres was the first to transform it into a central component of an influential political agenda. See Boisserée, 1823; Frankl, 1960; Hubert, 1961, 275–328; Leniaud, 1980.

⁴ Goethe, *Baukunst*, in.

⁵ Roder, 1956–57, 260–90; Nipperdey, 1981, 595–613.

decline . . . The abandoned ruins of the unfinished cathedral are a reflection of Germany . . . but they are also a symbol of the new *Reich* we wish to establish.⁶

After establishing a movement in 1814 for the completion of the cathedral in Cologne, Görres was able to turn it into a focal point for modern German nationalism. Even Goethe made a personal visit to Cologne a year later to help raise funds for the national project, the completion of the cathedral and, finally, it was the Prussian state that assumed responsibility for finishing the work of construction.

Görres simultaneously continued his activity in the academy and in Catholic and national politics. He was appointed professor of history at the University of Munich, was gradually drawn to Catholic mysticism, and became an extreme champion of Catholicism. At the same time, he and his students evinced growing interest in developments in the Holy Land and the fate of its churches. His devotees made pilgrimages to Palestine and donated funds to build churches there. One of them, the Herzog Maximilian Joseph, a leading member of the Catholic Bavarian royal house, arrived in Palestine in May 1838. His pilgrimage, like those of Michaud, Châteaubriand, and Poujoulat before him, reached its peak during the ceremony in which he was made a knight of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, donning the sword of Godfrey of Bouillon.⁷ In return, the duke donated a sum of money to the Franciscan friars, which enabled them to purchase the site of Christ's flagellation and build the first chapel to be erected in Jerusalem in the modern period.

Maximilian was followed by another of Görres' supporters, King Ludwig I of Bavaria, renowned for his philhellenic inclinations. He began efforts to try to restore the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to the splendour it had attained during the period of the Crusades. Ludwig encouraged the modern nationalist view which saw in the Catholic and Protestant rulers of Germany the successors of Frederick I 'Barbarossa' and Frederick II of Hohenstaufen.⁸ Ludwig I appointed a disciple and personal close friend of Görres,⁹ Johannes Nepemuk Sepp (1816–1909), as his representative on an expedition that toured Palestine from August 1845 to May 1846.¹⁰

⁶ J. Görres, 'Der Dom in Köln', *Rheinischer Merkur*, 20 Nov. 1814 quoted in Vanden Heuvel, 2001, 231.

⁷ Maximilian, 1839, 206–25.

⁸ Goren, 1999, 129, quoting from C. Klein, 'Deutsche Herrscher im heiligen Lande', *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, 15.11.1898, 1–4; 16.11.1898, 4–6.

⁹ Görres was one of those who personally signed Sepp's Ph.D. diploma. Goren, 1999, 128–34.

¹⁰ The ties between Ludwig I and Görres' Catholic circles came abruptly to an end when Sepp returned to Bavaria, due to the king's marriage to Spanish dancer Lola Montez. Ludwig dismissed ultra-Montanist professors who criticised him, including Sepp. The clash reached its peak during

Sepp, who also led the conservative and ultra-Montanist Catholic circles which preached that Rome should be supreme in any conflict with the nation-state, became the leading personality who induced Görres' devotees to take an interest in the Levant. An adherent of German nationalism, he also emphasised the importance of Barbarossa's Catholicism for German history.¹¹

In the late 1860s, Sepp supported Bismarck, who was preparing for war with France, and in 1872, after those hostilities were concluded, proposed to the chancellor that archaeological excavations be undertaken in what he, Sepp, had identified as the site of the cathedral of Tyre. The proposal was based on rumours, which he himself had already spread as early as 1845, that Barbarossa's golden crown had been discovered in the ruins of that cathedral during the earthquake of January 1837. Sepp developed a theory, based on a medieval source, that sections of the emperor's body (he had drowned on his way to the Holy Land) were brought from Asia Minor and buried in Tyre. He succeeded in convincing Bismarck that the facts of this story were true and of the prospects of finding Barbarossa's tomb. He proposed that the emperor's remains should then be transferred for reburial in the new architectural focal point of emerging German nationalism: the great cathedral of Cologne.¹² Sepp also believed that such an act would, more than anything else, symbolise the reunification of the German *Reich* and arouse unprecedented enthusiasm.¹³

In April 1873 Bismarck authorised the purchase of the 'cathedral' site in Tyre, and excavations began in 1874,¹⁴ jointly conducted by Sepp, his son Bernard, who was a historian, and Hans Prutz (1843–1929), a lecturer in history at the University of Berlin who had just completed a biography of Barbarossa. The chancellor's generous financial support enabled them to employ many workers and their activity aroused great interest. Though Sepp encouraged rumours that the tomb had been discovered, Barbarossa's remains were never found. Sepp's enthusiasm and self-conviction led to a deep controversy between him and Prutz; each held fast to his own convictions and published his own version of the expedition's results.

Görres' funeral in January 1848 when Sepp, who conducted the funeral of his mentor, opposed the queen's demand to be present. This event led directly to the bloody uprising in Munich and to Ludwig's abdication.

¹¹ Von Sybel, whose nationalist outlook did not differ from Sepp's, opposed the ultra-Montanist views, stressing the uncontested leadership of Barbarossa and the efforts of the popes and the church to undermine that leadership.

¹² For the exact quotation from the English newspaper, see Goren, 2003, 58.

¹³ Sepp, 1896, 86; Prutz, 1879, 3.

¹⁴ Sepp, 1879, 365–75.

Sepp continued to claim that Barbarossa had been buried in Tyre, while Prutz accused him of spreading lies and distorting the sources to serve his own purposes. But even Prutz did not renege on the German national narrative. His version of the events was that though the Germans had borne Barbarossa's body from Asia Minor to Tyre, he was finally buried at an unknown site in Acre. He maintained that the site they had excavated in Tyre was not the Cathedral of the Holy Cross but rather a Venetian church dedicated to St Mark.¹⁵

The Germans' nationalism evinced in this episode influenced even the opponents *par excellence* of the German scientists. French scholar Charles Clermont-Ganneau, who was also not lacking in nationalist spirit, noted with satisfaction that the most important finding of the excavations at Tyre was precisely an inscription in archaic French. English newspapers, too, were delighted at the German failure and expressed their joy that it had spared the world 'the romantic extravaganza of laying the body to rest in Cologne'.¹⁶

No matter where Friedrich was finally laid to rest, the state-financed search for his remains is clearly representative of the process by which Crusader remains and the Crusades themselves were 'nationalised'. It was also a peak point in the development of a close connection between Crusader remains and German national efforts in the Holy Land. One can easily point to another example. The Johananian Order, founded by King Friedrich Wilhelm IV in 1853, at first took upon itself to operate the Prussian hospice in the Old City of Jerusalem in order to extend aid to the ill and needy of the city; this Order later played a leading role in the transfer of the Muristan area, which included the Crusader hospital of the Order of St John, as a gift of the Ottoman sultan to German Emperor Wilhelm I.¹⁷

FRENCH NATIONALISM EXPROPRIATES THE CRUSADER REMAINS

The national discourse is even more pronounced in French writings of the nineteenth century than it is in their German counterparts. The pioneer of research in this field was Charles Jean Melchior de Vogüé (1829–1916), an archaeologist and diplomat, who was born into a family of the landed gentry of the *département* of Cher. His first journey to the

¹⁵ For the topography of Tyre during the Crusades see Mack, 1997 and compare Sepp, 1879 and Prutz, 1879, 6–8.

¹⁶ Goren, 1999, 138.

¹⁷ Sinno, 1982, 143–44.

Levant was conducted in 1853–54 and in 1868, after publishing his travel accounts, he became a member of the Académie. He returned for a second visit to the region, even being appointed ambassador to Istanbul in April 1871.¹⁸ Later, de Vogüé represented his country as ambassador in Vienna, capital of the Austro-Hungarian empire, a post from which he resigned only in February 1879, when Jules Grévy replaced Marshal MacMahon as the president of France.

In a work published in 1860, after his initial visit to the Holy Land, de Vogüé for the first time refers to Crusader architecture as being intrinsically French. The Crusaders, he wrote, ‘planted the French churches of their motherland, with their tall and elongated naves, among the Byzantine and Arab buildings. . .’¹⁹ But de Vogüé was primarily concerned with the sources of Gothic style: ‘Until forty years ago it was customary to assume that Gothic architecture originated with the Arabs and was brought to France in the wake of the Crusades.’ He was much troubled by this opinion. He admitted that the Romantic school which had made this claim had recently lost much ground, and most serious scholars now tended to explain the changes without attributing them to Oriental influences, but there was still room for concern since travellers who had recently journeyed to the Levant had once again been captivated by this concept.²⁰ He feared that such thinking would threaten identification of Gothic architecture with the French. He was much less concerned about the ‘French’ identity of Romanesque architecture, for even among those scholars who claimed that Gothic architecture was developed in the Levant there was a consensus of opinion that the Crusaders had brought to the Orient the Romanesque style of buildings and barrel vaults. De Vogüé, therefore, opposed the claim that Gothic architecture developed only when the advantages of pointed arches were discovered, and this, it was maintained, was during the Crusaders’ sojourn in the East.²¹ He pointedly noted that the majority of scholars who made this claim were not French and that they described the Crusader kingdom as an all-European event, ‘a sort of “world fair” at which all Christian nations were represented and from which every nation brought home

¹⁸ This post enabled him to continue his research and prove, *inter alia*, that when the famous statue of the Venus de Milo was discovered in 1820, its arms were already broken.

¹⁹ Vogüé, 1860, 37. However, he was aware of the fact, even though he tried to play it down, that there were also churches in Germany similar to those in the Holy Land, *ibid.*, 393. See Prawer’s introduction to the new edition of de Vogüé’s book, J. Prawer, ‘Preface’, Melchior de Vogüé, *Les églises de la Terre Sainte*, Toronto, 1973.

²⁰ De Vogüé, 1860, 394.

²¹ Cf. Wigley, 1856.

common ideas and art'. These scholars presented Gothic architecture as a hybrid which was created anew everywhere Arabs and Latins came into contact.

De Vogüé expended much effort to prove that Île de France, and not the Latin Orient, was the source of the Gothic style in architecture. In order to do so, he refuted the claim that there is a cause and effect relationship between the appearance of the pointed arch and the materialisation of Gothic architecture. Though utterly convinced that the pointed arch first appeared in France before it did in the Crusader Levant,²² he was prepared to admit that the pointed arch, as an architectural detail, developed more or less simultaneously both in the West and the East, but that its earliest systematic use was in the Levant.²³ But even if the pointed arch originated in the East, this is not proof of the Oriental character of the Gothic style. The history of the pointed arch, he claimed vehemently, has no relevance for the development of Gothic architecture. All architecture, so de Vogüé said, is not the result of the development of this or that detail. Gothic architecture is the outcome of numerous and extensive changes, the most important of which was the technological invention of the flying buttress. Most of these changes were evident in Île de France long before they spread to other areas. Even in other regions of Europe, flying buttresses appeared only where architects coming from Île de France were employed.²⁴

It is important to fathom de Vogüé's argument from this point onwards. On the one hand, he is convinced that the Crusaders were Frenchmen and that Crusader architecture is nothing more than French architectural style. On the other hand, he stubbornly maintained, quite rightly, that the Gothic style of architecture was created in the French *metropole* and was not the outcome of innovations adopted in the Levant. De Vogüé exhibits an internal contradiction that was part and parcel of the nationalist narrative. The Crusaders were, indeed, Frenchmen who settled in colonies abroad, and all their acts can be attributed to their French heritage. However, even he admitted that there was some difference between solely French activity, executed on the soil of the metropolis, and French activity which was combined with that of the indigenous population in the colonies.

²² De Vogüé mentions buildings such as the monastery at Charité sur Loire, whose construction was completed in 1104, and the atrium of St Marco in Venice, built during the eleventh century, as edifices in which pointed arches were used.

²³ De Vogüé, 1973, 398.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 399.

The relationship between colonies and the metropolis, manifested in the relations of the colonising Crusaders with their 'metropolis', on the one hand, and with the local residents of the 'colonies', on the other, would become a major issue with which researchers of the Crusades were to deal for the next century. The parallel which Michaud drew between the Crusades and the French conquest of Algeria led not only to the identification of the modern 'metropolis' with medieval France but also to identification of the Crusader ideal with that of colonialism. Logically, then, if the conquest of Algeria was a Crusade, as Michaud maintained, then the Crusades were also colonialist conquests. The 'nationalisation' of the Crusades led to the more complex discussion about the nature of colonial rule in the East. Is it possible to assume that the Frankish settlers in the East developed innovations which were unknown in France itself? What was actually the nature of this hybrid society?

Throughout this book, I will argue that the nationalist and colonial discourses are recurrent themes in the central issues with which I shall deal in the following chapters.

PART II

*Crusader studies between colonialist and
post-colonialist discourse*

CHAPTER 4

Colonial and anti-colonial interpretations

In the previous chapters I have shown how nationalist discourse and colonialist ways of thinking conditioned and reshaped the historiography of the Crusades and set a different agenda for Crusader studies. However, whereas the introduction of nationalist discourse is almost obvious, and certainly not unique to the history of the Crusades, the introduction of colonial discourse is not as clear and univalent.

Thus, if the appropriation of the all-European endeavour by French historians, or the turning of Godfrey of Bouillon into a Belgian national hero, could easily be understood as emanating from nineteenth-century nationalist discourse, the colonialist discourse is much more evasive and therefore more difficult to define. All references to the 'other', the 'foreigner', the 'native', or the 'local' are open to diverse interpretations.

In the following chapters I shall attempt to argue that several of the most important and fundamental research issues raised in Crusader historiography, as well as some of the answers to these questions, were already formulated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and that many of them were influenced by hidden colonialist values. These values do not always correspond to the negative images usually associated with pro-colonialist writing, and are manifested also in the writings of those who expressed overt anti-colonialist sentiments. In any event I believe that one fundamental question, the issue of the relationships between European settlers and local residents, which had already been raised during the second half of the nineteenth century, will best clarify the introduction of the colonial discourse to the history of the Crusades.

RELATIONS OF EUROPEAN SETTLERS WITH THE LOCAL POPULATION: THE PRO-COLONIALIST MODEL OF INTEGRATION

Relations between the Crusaders and the local population became a central issue in French scholarly thinking during the 1850s. One may

attribute this interest to the Crimean War, which broke out in 1853–1854, and even more so to the bloody events of 1860 in Damascus, in the course of which that city's Christians were massacred.¹ Both events brought to the forefront the responsibility assumed by European powers (particularly France and Russia) for the fate of the 'native Christians' of the Levant. The political connection was manifested even earlier, when Napoleon III demanded that the Capitulations of 1740 be reinstated. In practical terms, this meant that the keys to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre be once again placed in French hands and that the right be granted to affix a silver star on the site of Christ's birth in Bethlehem. In any case, the 1860 anti-Christian riots clarified, in the most obvious and tangible manner, how weak was the Ottoman regime and to what extent the local residents – particularly the Christians among them – were in dire need of support from Western Europe. To the French it seemed that the age-old circumstances which 750 years earlier had led to the oppression of Oriental Christianity by the 'Turks', and were the initial cause of the Crusades, were now being re-enacted before their very eyes.

The first to define the similarity between nineteenth-century colonialist France and the situation which existed in the twelfth century, especially in regard to the local Christian population, was Emmanuel Guillaume Rey, who visited the Levant three times between 1857 and 1864, when the fate of Eastern Christianity was being re-examined. During these travels Rey conducted archaeological surveys of Crusader remains and wrote his important and influential studies. Rey, who did not belong to any of the French academic establishments and spent most of life, until his death in 1916, in relative anonymity, created what may be termed 'the French colonialist justification of the Crusades'.²

The essence of Rey's views of the relationship between the Franks and the native inhabitants (and of their modern parallel: the relationship between France and its colonies) was presented in an essay which dealt with 'The French domination of Syria during the Middle Ages' (*Essai sur la domination française en Syrie durant le moyen âge*). Rey praises the good relations between 'the Christians' (meaning the Franks) and the local population, claiming that they were a result of 'the efficiency and political sagacity' with which the Franks conducted their affairs in Syria. He categorically denies 'the view widely held during the last century about

¹ During de Vogüé's sojourn in the Levant. Kennedy was the first to raise this possibility. See Kennedy, 1994, 2; Ma'oz, 1968, 226–40.

² Very little is known about his biography. See Kennedy, 3; Bordeaux, 1926, 77–100.

the lack of patience, the fanaticism, and the blindness of the Franks in their relations with Islam'. All these, he claims, do not conform to the 'facts' which show that the Franks and the local inhabitants lived together everywhere – in rural as well as urban settings, in the mountains and the seaports – a cohabitation which existed even in the ranks of the Frankish armies. Even the special coins minted in the East, which were no more than imitations of Arab coins, are proof, in Rey's opinion, of joint management of economic affairs. According to Rey, the Franks were 'Frenchmen' or 'Christians' who knew how to create a *modus vivendi* with the local inhabitants, and glorification of these relations was necessary for glorification of French colonialist rule.³

Those French scholars who followed this line of argumentation continued to praise the unique ability of the Franks to maintain a warm and fair relationship with their subjects. Gaston Dodu, a teacher of history and geography who did much to inculcate the heritage of French national history, went so far as to claim that the encounter between 'Frenchmen' and 'local inhabitants' led to the creation of a new civilisation combining Christianity and Islam. 'The Latin Kingdom was spared the hatred between [rival] religions and races', he writes. 'When one considers what happened in Torquemada's Castille . . . or in Mexico invaded by the Pope's armies . . . it is difficult to imagine that . . . medieval Latins did indeed succeed in living in a different way and [at the same time] were not isolated in the heart of Islam.' Between the lines one can discern Dodu's patronising attitude towards Eastern cultures; nor does he conceal his admiration for the Franks who succeeded in 'rising above the aversion they felt for infidel people, customs, and languages'. Yet, he fully believes in the good relations that prevailed between the Franks and the local inhabitants, and warned against any interpretation on the basis of specific events that indicated the opposite. Thus, for example, he believes that the slaughter of the Muslims in Jerusalem immediately after the conquest was not customary and that the Franks did not necessarily indicate that they adopted massacre as an accepted form of behaviour. 'The Franks', he writes, 'were not in the habit of being mass murderers.' Elsewhere he comments that 'race or religion were no obstacle, and the blending of the two societies was implemented under the reign of the Frankish rulers with an alacrity that was in no way influenced by the state of war'.⁴

Dodu drew up a very precise list of Oriental characteristics which were adopted by Crusader society; some of them were external characteristics

³ Rey, 1866, 17.

⁴ Dodu, 1914, 42, 43–44, 52–53.

that indicate a different attitude towards one's own body while others related to matters of education and innovations with which the Franks became acquainted in the East. Among those he lists were: Oriental exaggeration, as exemplified in designating Tancred 'King of Asia' and Baldwin I 'Lord of Babylon and Asia'; loose-fitting clothing; growing beards and dyeing them; adoption of baths; use of Oriental ornamentation, glazed ceramics, and frescoes to decorate houses; study of the Arabic language, and so on. He dwells at length on the friendly relations that developed between the Franks and the Muslims, reflecting nostalgically upon the extensive help which the local inhabitants extended to the Franks, on mixed marriages, and on the resulting offspring of mixed racial lineage. The Franks, he writes, established in the Levant 'a regime marked by tolerance in religious matters and by the determination of the conquerors not to impose upon the primordial inhabitants of the land any political subordination, except that demanded by feudalism . . . All these invested the newly established kingdom with security for the future.'⁵

A few years later, another historian, Louis Madelin, who would later become a member of the French Academy, continued the line of thought that combined nationalism and pro-colonialist attitudes and extended it by claiming that France had an inborn capacity for colonial rule. He published his views in a series of articles written while serving with the French military during World War I. These articles were collected in 1918 in a volume entitled *French Expansion from Syria to the Rhine* (*L'Expansion française de la Syrie au Rhin*). Madelin claims that the Crusaders had been tolerant and enlightened Frenchmen who created a joint society with their local subjects, and that the latter, for their part, helped the Franks in the defence of the borders of their kingdom against common enemies. The French Crusaders, he says (referring, most probably to himself as well), were a model for their legitimate heirs who 'in these very days' were fighting to defend France's threatened borders. In his acceptance speech upon being elected to the French Academy in May 1929, Madelin portrayed himself as the pupil *par excellence* of Melchior de Vogüé. And indeed, he masterfully expounded the French view put forward by his mentor that stressed the dual link between the Crusaders and the French, on the one hand, and between the Crusades and the colonialist experience, on the other. This combined nationalist and colonialist view, it would seem, reached its highest expression in the important work by René

⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

Grousset published in the 1930s, and continued to represent the dominant French discourse until after World War II.⁶

Despite the fact that these two approaches – the nationalist one that portrayed the Crusaders as Frenchmen and the colonialist one that treats of the Frankish Kingdom in terms of a modern colonialist ‘empire’ – appeared on the scene together in the writings of Michaud, they should be treated separately. Nationalist discourse dominated nineteenth-century historical writing and was not typical of the French alone, but the adoption of the Crusades as a central part of their national history was unique to the French way of thinking. The colonialist approach to the Crusades, however, was more widespread; it reflected the European *Zeitgeist* and was also adopted by non-French scholars. One example is the Englishman Claude Reignier Conder (1848–1910), whose writings on the subject can be defined as a British colonialist interpretation of the Crusades.

Conder, like his French colleagues, depicts the Crusader period in terms of ‘the white man’s burden’. In his opinion, it was a regime most beneficial to its subjects, contrary to Muslim rule which, both before and after the Crusades, only caused them harm. Conder points to the similarity between the wonders of British rule in India and the advantages of Crusader rule in the East in no uncertain terms, leaving nothing to the interpretation of his readers. For him, it is self-evident that the Crusades had positive results. He described the leaders of the Crusades as

statesmen as well as soldiers, who were able to control their own wild followers [sic], and to direct their energies to useful ends. They were tolerant rulers, whose policy was the true policy of justice and equal law: who built up strong states in the conquered lands, and stood above the prejudices and hatreds of their age. Under their direction a mighty commerce was developed, which enriched Italy and educated Europe. Under their laws the Holy Land enjoyed a measure of peace and prosperity greater than any western country enjoyed in the same age.

He attributes the decline of the Holy Land to the Muslims:

When Kelaun carried out the work of Saladin to its conclusion the night settled down on Asia, and the unhappy Arabs exchanged the tolerant rule of the Franks for a bitter Egyptian bondage. It was Europe, not Asia, that profited most by the Crusades, and by the occupation of Syria. When Christians and Moslems came to know each other better friendly relations were established, which enabled the

⁶ Madelin, 1916, 314–58; Dodu, 1894, 205–15; Duncalf, 1916, I, 137–45; Grousset, 1934–36, I, 287, 314; II, 141, 225, 226, 518, 615, 754–55; III, Introduction, xv–xvi and 57–59, 61–62.

traders of the West to pursue their calling even after the kingdom was lost. For a century all Palestine and Syria were held by generations of Aryans who were born and lived and died in the East. For another century after that Syria and the plains to the south were still ruled by the great Orders, whose experience taught them how to deal with Oriental vassals.

Conder has no praise for the Arab civilisation that developed in Syria prior to the Crusader period:

No new Bible, not even a new Korân, was produced by the Arab race; and knowledge was despised by the Turk. In our own times we see perhaps the first signs of a new awakening; and the tide sets once more from Europe to the shores of Acre and to the Nile. For more than thirty years the old County of Tripoli and Seigneurie of Beirût have now been ruled by Christians. Cyprus has passed to the nation which conquered it under Richard Lion Heart; and Englishmen have done what St. Louis failed to do in Egypt. Tunis has fallen to the race of that great Christian monarch; and the commerce of the West, in Syria, and Asia Minor, presses once more upon the Turkish Empire . . . The kingdom of Jerusalem was the model of just and moderate rule, such as we boast to have given to India, under somewhat similar conditions. . .⁷

Conder never missed an opportunity to point to the 'English national identity' of Richard Lion Heart, while at the same time giving expression to his personal political viewpoint on Palestine and its future in his own times. He argues that it was man, not nature, who had changed the character of the country, and that it was man who had in earlier ages transformed it into a land of milk and honey. Palestine's present state of poverty was a result of the decline in the size of its population and it would change for the better if energetic, wealthy people, such as were capable of developing the country, were to settle there. Should a European state provide an incentive for the development of Palestine through road building, the drainage of swamps, and afforestation, the country might flourish once again. Until then it would remain in its state of poverty and backwardness.⁸

Conder's patronising attitude is no different from those of Rey, Dodu, and Grousset, though he does deviate from them in the degree of responsibility that he feels for the local subjects. The French colonialist approach treated the Crusades in the very same manner as French nineteenth-century colonialism viewed the settlement of Algeria. And when this school speaks of 'the creation of a new nation in the Oriental colonies' it

⁷ Conder, 1897, 414–15, 427–28.

⁸ Conder, 1880, 323–32.

is referring no less to the political world of the nineteenth century and to colonial dreams in Algeria than to the Crusades.

Until the end of World War II, no scholars questioned the colonialist interpretation of the Crusades. However, the collapse of the British Empire and the rise of new nation-states (among which is the state of Israel) that replaced the colonies led to the creation of a new model, one that could be termed 'anti-colonialist', even though it sprang from two different sources: one in post-war Britain, and the other in Israel of the 1950s.

RELATIONS OF EUROPEAN SETTLERS WITH THE LOCAL
POPULATION: THE ANTI-COLONIALIST MODEL OF SEGREGATION

From the early 1950s the colonialist approach to the Crusades, propounded by Rey, Dodu, Madelin, and Grousset, began to be rebutted by modern scholarship. Many of the scholars who belonged to the new school continued to view the society created in the Levant during the Crusades as a colonial society, but portrayed it in pejorative terms. The new approach regarded the society which existed in the Levant as a segregated society with the Franks constituting a domineering elite.⁹ The former pro-colonialist school considered colonialism as an enlightened form of rule that brought the best of the West to the underdeveloped colonies, whereas the new approach viewed it as a system of exploitation resulting from the overwhelming power of the colonialists. The adherents of the new school did not abandon the colonialist discourse, but adopted a negative approach to colonialism. They began attributing the ills of modern colonialism to the Crusader settlement in the Levant and the alleged 'Frankish colonial rule' was regarded accordingly.

Raymond Smail of Cambridge and Joshua Prawer of Jerusalem were the first to develop the basic principles of the new approach, describing Frankish society as set aside both spatially and economically from the local subjects. According to this approach, the Franks tended to shut themselves off in cities and fortresses and took no real part in the cultivation of the land. Only the local inhabitants, say the adherents to the new theory, 'lived in the rural areas and engaged in agriculture'.¹⁰

⁹ See Smail, 1956, 57–63; Prawer, 1980b, 102–42; Richard, 1980, 655; Hamilton, 1980, 90; Pringle, 1986a, 12; 1989, 18–19.

¹⁰ Prawer, 1980b, 102; Cahen, 1950–51, 286; Cahen, 1940, 327. Benvenisti, 1970, 219 and 233 differs between the number of Frankish villages, which was very small (less than ten villages), and the

As early as 1956 Smail presented the principles of the new approach in a series of concepts which together formed an innovative theory:

The student is left to choose between two sharply differing conceptions of the nature of Franco-Syrian society. On the one hand are the scholars who have regarded the orientalizing of Frankish manners in Syria, and the instances which appear in the sources of friendly relations between Franks and Muslims, as evidence of the creation of a Franco-Syrian nation and civilization; on the other are those who . . . consider that the Franks remained a ruling class, separated from their Syrian subjects by language and religion, with force as the ultimate sanction of their dominion.¹¹

Smail relied on no new sources in addition to those that served the scholars who developed the previous pro-colonialist theory; however, he disagreed with the manner in which they interpreted these texts. He assigned greater importance to sources that testified to tense relations between Frankish and local populations and less importance to those that pointed to their integration. His predecessors, of course, did the exact opposite, putting the emphasis on sources which seemingly proved the existence of friendly relations between the Franks and the local inhabitants.

Thus, for example, Smail accepted the reliability of sources which testified to a certain Frankish assimilation with the Oriental communities. He admitted, for example, that the Franks did employ Syrian doctors, cooks, servants, and artisans; that they 'clothed themselves in eastern garments' and included 'fruit and dishes of the country' in their diet; that their houses were planned according to Syrian style; that 'they had dancing girls at their entertainments; professional mourners at their funerals; [that they] took baths, used soap, ate sugar'.¹² Yet Smail did not see the adoption of these customs as indicative of cultural assimilation; they testified to no more than accommodation to the external conditions of life.

Smail categorically rejected the historical interpretation of his predecessors which claimed integration between the Frankish and indigenous societies. Instead, together with Joshua Prawer, he proposed a model that assumed a cultural and spatial segregation between the ruling Franks and

number of farmhouses, which was bigger. See Benvenisti, 1982. Smail, 1973, 80 refers to Prawer in claiming that: 'Professor Prawer considers that nearly all Syrian Franks were townees, without roots in the countryside and, as always, his arguments are well grounded. . . . The conclusion seems irresistible that Europeans were rare exceptions among a rural peasantry composed almost entirely of indigenous Syrians.' For new data concerning Palestinian Muslims before and during the Crusades, see Kedar, 1997a.

¹¹ Smail, 1956, 40 and 62–63.

¹² *Ibid.*, 43.

the autochthonous rural population. The model is explained by a series of assumptions, each emerging from a previous assumption and sustaining all the others. The model – as in the case of Rey – combined to create an integral social and economic explanation of the Frankish East. This model was discussed at length in my earlier book. However, to facilitate the discussion and the tracing of anti-colonialist attitudes in the study of the Crusades, I will summarise some of the main points here.¹³

Major aspects of the model of segregation

The assertion that the Franks were segregated from the local population, protecting themselves behind the fortified walls of cities and castles, was based on a series of assumptions relating to demography, the state of security, and the degree of Arabisation and Islamisation of the local population. Furthermore, the scholars who supported this model maintained that segregation caused Frankish society to undergo a profound social metamorphosis which changed a society, originally largely rural, into an urban one. Several principal reasons were offered for this process.

External danger was perceived as being an all-important element. It is assumed that the Franks were exposed to perpetual Muslim attack which threatened their very existence and forced them to find shelter behind the fortified walls of cities and fortresses, for ‘the threat of invasion [was] almost continuous’.¹⁴

The exponents of this model, who were aware of the fact (to which we shall return later) that attacks from across the external borders were not actually unremitting, and certainly did not threaten the entire kingdom, added yet another element to the strategic threat – the sense of insecurity did not arise solely from an external danger but from the potential collaboration between the local population and external enemies.

Smail, Prawer, and even Claude Cahen claim that the state of insecurity which compelled the Franks to live in separate quarters also emanated also from the fact that the majority of the autochthonous population was composed mainly of Muslims who tended to collaborate with their fellow-religionists across the borders. ‘The countryside’, writes Prawer,

¹³ Ellenblum, 1998, 4–II.

¹⁴ Smail, 1956, 204; see also Cahen, 1940, 327: ‘Les caractères de l’occupation franque découlent essentiellement d’un fait, leur petit nombre. Se disperser au milieu de populations neutres ou hostiles eût constitué pour les Francs un danger de mort; aussi se groupent-ils dans un petit nombre de localités, La masse des petites gens reste dans quelques villes . . . Dans les campagnes, l’occupation franque est totalement dépourvue de base rurale.’

'was settled in an overwhelming majority by Muslims. . .'¹⁵ Therefore, the proponents of the model assumed, as a self-evident fact, that the process of Islamisation of the local population had already reached such a stage by the end of the eleventh century that the country was inhabited mainly by Muslims, an assumption which had never been critically examined.

The local Christians also preferred, according to this model, collaboration with the Muslims with whom they shared a common language and culture, to relations with Roman Catholics. Smail argues:

All Syrian Christians, orthodox and monophysite, had lived for centuries under the generally tolerant Muslim rule of the caliphs. During the Latin occupation, there were communities of the same faith in the lands of Islam as well as in those of the crusaders . . . Between them and their Latin overlords there was the bond of a common faith, but they were tied also to the Muslims by history, language, and habits. They gave the Franks no trouble, but they could regard the prospect of Muslim rule with equanimity . . . It would therefore appear that the native Christians provided no firm basis for Latin rule, and that they increased rather than alleviated the Franks' military problems.¹⁶

Even Claude Cahen, who independently developed similar assumptions, tended to ascribe the existence of some of the Frankish fortresses to danger from within:

It would seem that the students of Crusader military architecture did not pay enough attention to the significance of the fortresses they studied. They related to them as if they were to serve first and foremost to defend the territory against external enemies. This was in fact the case of those located at strategic points along the borders. But many of the fortresses could have no other function (as was the case in the West) but to keep watch over internal regions of the country. . .¹⁷

The inclination of Oriental Christians to cooperate with the Muslims is also attributed to the Latin priests' deposing of Greek Orthodox clergy from the upper levels of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The Muslim rulers, it was claimed, had been clever enough to grant their Oriental Christian subjects broad autonomy in matters of religious rites and had allowed them to appoint their own religious leadership. Additional reasons for the local Christians' probable tendency to cooperate with the Muslims stemmed from the fact that throughout the entire period no small proportion of them continued to live in areas that were under Muslim control. It is also possible that the Oriental Christians were offended by

¹⁵ Prawer, 1980d, 201.

¹⁶ Smail, 1956, 52.

¹⁷ Cahen, 1983, 169.

their legal status, which was inferior to that of the Franks, for the latter had courts of their own, separate from those of the local Christians.¹⁸

The assumption that local Christians preferred to maintain ties with the Muslims because of common language, culture, and customs rests on two additional hidden assumptions: first, that the Arabisation of the Christian population of the Levant had been completed before the Frankish conquest;¹⁹ and second, that the Arabisation of the Turkish tribes, which constituted an appreciable part of the forces against whom the Franks had fought, had also been completed by the twelfth century, so that differences of language, culture, and customs between the local Christians and the Muslim Turks were almost non-existent.²⁰

The segregation model does not detail the stages of Islamisation and Arabisation undergone by the local population, but the picture that emerges includes two elements: first, that since the mid-seventh century the local population had undergone a process of assimilation into the ruling Arab-Muslim culture, a process which caused many of them to embrace Islam; second, even those local Christians who did not convert adopted many features of Arab-Muslim culture, especially the use of Arabic as the everyday language.

From this point of view, even if the Franks were not exposed to the risk of daily attacks by external enemies, those who dared to settle in the rural areas were exposed to danger from the potential hostility of the Arabised inhabitants, both Muslims and Christians.

The segregation model attributes much importance to the alleged demographic ratio between the Franks and the other segments of the population. Its proponents assume that the local population had greatly decreased prior to and in the course of the Frankish conquest, but that even then it was much more numerous than the Franks. When they felt a need to resort to figures, some of the developers of the segregation model claimed that the Franks accounted for 15 per cent to 25 per cent of

¹⁸ On the ousting of the Greek ecclesiastical hierarchy and for the confiscation of property belonging to the Greek church, see Raymond of Aguilers, 154; Matthew of Edesse, *RHC*, ch. 21, 54–55; William of Tyre, 6, 23, 340; for the transfer of Greek property to the Latin monastery of Mt Tabor, see Hospital, II A1, 897–98. For the separate judiciary of the Latins and local Christians, see Jean of Ibelin, I, ch. IV, 26; cf. Hamilton, 1980, 161–63; Mayer, 1977, 1–33. The schism between the Greek and Latin clergy was apparently expressed also in the fact that only very few of the Latins knew Greek. See William of Tyre, 15, 21, 703. For the claim that the Muslims vested the Eastern churches with religious autonomy, see Sivan, 1967a.

¹⁹ Hamilton, 1980, 159–69; Cahen, 1971, 285–92; Cahen, 1972, 62–63; Riley-Smith, 1977, 9–22.

²⁰ Prawer does not see a real difference between the Muslim Turks and other Muslims. See Prawer, 1980d, 62.

the entire population, and that 'the principal difficulty faced by the Crusaders was not a lack of land, but a lack of manpower'.²¹

The segregation model maintains that the Frankish conquest of the Levant was accompanied by a radical social metamorphosis which transformed a largely rural society into an urban one. In accordance with this approach, the Crusaders preferred, or were forced to prefer, life in cities or fortresses rather than in villages and Frankish society underwent, in fact, an accelerated process of urbanisation, centuries before a similar change occurred in the West. This preference, the model's proponents claim, was only one outcome of the enmity of the local population towards them, one which led to almost complete segregation and to an apartheid-like regime. It was Prawer who repeatedly placed emphasis on the rareness of Frankish rural settlement, an issue that was almost completely overlooked by the partisans of the earlier pro-colonialist model, and to which even Smail paid little attention. 'Let it be stated from the very beginning', he wrote, 'the Crusader society was predominantly, almost exclusively, an urban society.'²² Though Prawer pointed to the presence of a few such agricultural settlements, these were, he believed, exceptions to the rule. He writes:²³

The castle and the countryside, the two dominant features of the Middle Ages that prevailed well into the central period except in some areas like Italy, did not play the same role in the Latin Near East . . . The new perspective [which I call the model of segregation – R. E.] . . . describes Crusader society as mainly urban and the Syro-Palestinian cities not only as urban, royal or seigniorial, administration but also as the principal habitat of the Western conqueror and immigrants. . .²⁴

According to Prawer, the very existence of large and well-fortified cities in the eastern Mediterranean, cities which were, indeed, larger and better defended than most contemporary cities in the Latin West and which continued to serve as residential and economic centres even after the decline of the classical urban centres of Europe, enabled such a process of accelerated urbanisation. The cities of the East are perceived as having provided conditions of security and convenience which were preferable to the hard physical conditions and shaky security that were the lot of the rural population. The Franks, says Prawer, were unable to establish

²¹ Prawer, 1975, I, 570–71; Prawer, 1980c, 102–3, 117; Russell, 1985, 295–314; Benvenisti, 1970, 25–28.

²² Prawer, 1980b, 102.

²³ *Ibid.*, 102–42; Richard, 1980, 655; Pringle, 1989, 14–25; Smail, 1951, 133–49.

²⁴ Prawer, 1977, 179; cf. Smail, 1973, 67.

new cities, but they were definitely capable of settling in the partially abandoned and partially destroyed existing ones. In short, the Frankish settlers filled the vacuum created by the expulsion and massacre of the earlier populations. 'The creation of Crusaders' city-settlement and city population was conditioned and defined by the intrusion of a mainly agricultural and village-dwelling society into a country where the city had been for centuries an established and central institution.'²⁵

Crusader castles and cities

The proponents of the segregation model repeatedly stress the strategic value of the fortresses and emphasise their role in the defence of the realm and in the attacks on the neighbouring countries. Castles and fortresses were perceived as a substitute for undefended rural life, as Jean Richard writes:

What was characteristic of this feudal society was that it hardly had a distinct rural character . . . Most of the landlords, even those who received entire villages, very rarely lived on their estates. There were, of course, also manor houses, fortified to a lesser or greater extent, which have been uncovered by archaeologists; however, these were the exception to the rule . . . The military populations of the kingdom, the principalities, and the counties were urban and lived either in cities or in castles that sprang up quickly on the Latin states. Aware of the military force they could muster against the Muslims, the Crusaders speedily began erecting a network of fortresses, some of them quite impressive, others less so, that were intended to defend their estates against incursions. The lords of these castles, together with their vassals, took up permanent residence in them to maintain guard.²⁶

Several scholars, such as Raymond Smail, also attributed administrative and organisational functions to the fortresses, but these were considered by most of them to be secondary roles and of limited importance. The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem is therefore depicted as a sort of centralised state, with clearly delineated borders and the capacity to define clear and agreed-upon spatial policies aiming to secure the defence of the realm (by creating fortified centres in the right locations) and the rational distribution of population.

Thus, the forging of a new historiographical approach to the Crusades by Smail and Prawer during the early 1950s was a major conceptual change similar to the one established 120 years earlier, when Jean François Michaud first introduced the nationalist and colonialist discourses into

²⁵ Prawer, 1980b, 102.

²⁶ Richard, 1980, 556.

Crusader historiography, and the even more important introduction of Rey's ideas forty years later. During the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, scholars tended to view both the Frankish settlers and the local inhabitants as forming different parts of one colonial society; there were constant disputes over questions such as who had greater influence on developments in armour, castles, ways of life, and laws, etc., the European newcomers or the indigenous populations, but they were both considered as forming the same society.

Smail was the first to point out that the historiographical dispute is actually between scholars who supported the colonialist way of thinking and the expansionist aspirations prevalent in France after World War I, and between a 'new school' which he failed to define, but which was actually an anti-colonialist one. Smail ignored the contributions of Michaud and Rey and, as far as he was concerned, French 'colonialist consciousness' was an outcome of World War I alone. For that reason he used blunt language when referring to the opinions of his predecessors, terming the theory they had developed as 'propaganda written with reference to a peace treaty' and as representative of French colonialist sentiments.²⁷

Indeed, some of these studies – even those having great scientific value – could be read as political manifests and propaganda. As but one example, the reader is referred to the conclusion of the volume by Demitri Hayek, a French scholar of Lebanese origin who studied the Frankish legal system and concluded his book with the hope that all of Syria would soon again be subject to French law and order.²⁸

Smail's claim that those who developed the older model were influenced by French colonialist sentiments was very much ahead of his time. However, although he believed that to question the 'sociology of knowledge' of his predecessors is as legitimate as the questioning of their writing, he was unable to critically put similar historiographical questions to himself and his colleagues. Smail, like those who preceded him, considered Crusader society to be a colonialist undertaking, but unlike them he already considered colonialism a negative manifestation of intercultural relations. Moreover, in contrast to the French who found positive parallels between 'Frankish colonialism' and 'French colonialism', he himself could only point out negative parallels between the medieval and modern 'colonialisms'.

²⁷ Smail, 1956, 41.

²⁸ Hayek, 1925, 157.

*Zionist ideology and the interpretation of the Crusades:
settlement and immigration*

If Joshua Prawer were alive today he would no doubt deny any linkage between his Zionist political beliefs and the model of segregation that he developed. However, the connection between this model and the manner in which Zionism in the 1950s conceived of the essence of the relationship between European immigrants and the indigenous population can also be found in Zionist literature that preceded Prawer's academic writing.

Already in 1931, five years before Prawer's own immigration to Palestine, Shmuel Ussishkin, the son of Zionist leader Menahem Ussishkin,²⁹ drew a historical analogy between the Crusaders and the Zionists, thus formulating a Palestine-Jewish view on the Crusades. Ussishkin was no historian, but Prawer was aware of his book, and even bought a copy for his private library. This is how Ussishkin explained his analogy:

The history of the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem is of special interest to the Zionists, for . . . the very problem they [i.e., the Crusaders] faced . . . was how to establish a Christian centre in the midst of Oriental, Muslim states, a centre that would differ from its neighbours in religion, origin, language, and culture, a centre that originates in the West and is sustained by it. The Zionists today face the same issue: how to create, in the very midst of the Muslim states, a Jewish state that will differ from the neighbouring states in its religion, culture, origin, and language, a centre that will be created by external forces coming from the West.

Ussishkin, however, also took a great interest in the failure of the Crusades, his major incentive for studying the period: 'in order to study the reasons and causes of the failure, and in order to learn how to avoid those mistakes that led to so many and decisive results'. He tried, therefore, to explain the failure of the Crusades in modern geo-political terms:

In comparison to the small area of the state, its borders were far too long and it was difficult for the king and the princes to defend the entire extent of this lengthy border with the small forces at their disposal; it was always easy for the Muslim Arab princes to find a weak spot in this lengthy chain through which they could advance into the interior of the country.

Ussishkin, however, believed that demography was the major weakness of the Crusader states: 'The reasons for failure were many . . . [but] the major

²⁹ Menahem Abraham Mendel Ussishkin, 1863–1941, was the president of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) for nearly twenty years (1923–41) and in this office he contributed greatly to the purchase of lands for Zionist agricultural settlements.

and overriding one . . . was the structure of the state. Instead of becoming the overwhelming majority of the state and instead of controlling the village lands – the very foundation of the realm – the Latins in the Kingdom of Jerusalem were always a thin stratum of ruling classes.³⁰ The Crusader state collapsed, he argues, because it failed to attract immigrants, to create a Latin majority in the country, and to settle upon its land. Here in a nutshell is the Zionist ideology together with a Zionist brand of Crusader historiography, which is later to appear in Prawer's writings.

Yet, Prawer's viewpoint was not dictated solely by his Zionist ideals. His anti-colonialist intellectual agenda was quite similar to that of Smail; one might even venture to say that Prawer's anti-colonialist doctrine was more orderly and rested on a firmer ideological basis than did that of his English colleague.

For Smail, the Crusaders were sort of forerunners of British colonialism. His anti-colonialist approach is most evident in his attitude to the earliest model which advocated a narrative of integration between the rulers and the ruled. He accused Madelin, Dodu, and Grousset of developing a pro-colonialist and nationalist discourse, but his anger was especially directed at Madelin, probably because the latter was not a bona fide scholar of the Crusader period. Emmanuel Rey, however, who made the most important contribution to the development of the pro-colonialist outlooks, was barely mentioned at all by Smail who stressed the role of his successors by depicting all of them as French nationals and as pro-colonialist scholars who ignored the clear historical facts. Several years later, when asked – in the framework of a symposium conducted in Jerusalem in May 1984 – to expound his opinion on whether the Crusades were an early form of colonialism, he was much less decisive. Colonialism, he claimed on that occasion, is a complex concept with too many meanings to be really useful in historiography.³¹

In contrast to Smail, Prawer had no hesitations and was much more determined with regard to his anti-colonialist ideology. He did not use it only to explain why the Crusaders' refrained from settling in the countryside or to clarify what led to the collapse of the kingdom, but expressed his negative views of what he considered to be the character of Crusader colonialism. At the 1984 symposium, Prawer did not miss the opportunity to present the major points of his historiographical approach. He did not retreat from the declared connection he had made between

³⁰ Ussishkin, 1931, 4–5, 63, 172, Ussishkin was also interested in the history of British colonial rule.

³¹ Kedar, 1992 (symposium), 342–47.

the Crusaders and 'colonialism'; in fact, it is doubtful if he could have done so after publishing his second important volume, entitled *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem: European Colonialism in the Middle Ages*:

Now the Franks maintained from the beginning a fixed attitude toward the conquered population . . . which I called 'apartheid.' . . . you might say that this is too modern a term; but there was apartheid! . . . It is only Madelin and some do-gooders who tried to find the people coming together, but they didn't succeed; for if you find one or two Muslims talking with the Franks, it is not a proof of Orientalization or *rapprochement* . . . So it is perfectly correct to describe the system as apartheid.

What do the Franks do to the Oriental Christians? The patriarch of Antioch is kicked out, the patriarch of Jerusalem is kicked out or disappears . . . the churches . . . are confiscated, their bishops do not exist. And what happens to the Muslims is obviously even worse.

The . . . attitude to culture . . . is a 'colonial attitude' again. You do not accept anything local. You take the natives' houses, you take their spices, their way of cooking – but you build your churches in the Romanesque style, you wear European fashions, your clergyman comes from Europe, you think that the Muslims are a bunch of ignorants. . .³²

Thus, Praver presents a clear and definite approach, which at the same time is both anti-colonialist and Zionist in character.

One cannot reduce Praver's copious works on the Crusades and present them simply as apologetic Zionist writings. Praver himself would probably find it difficult to define his historiographical outlook concerning the region that stretches between Europe and the Levant. From his vantage point, the Crusaders were foreign conquerors who refused to integrate into the area they conquered, created an aggressive and exploitative colonial regime, isolated themselves behind the walls of their cities and castles, and refrained from any contact with the conquered population. Praver did indeed try to present the Crusaders as an anti-thesis to the patterns of Zionist organisation in Palestine as he understood or envisioned them. As noted, he believed that the Crusaders' greatest weaknesses emanated from their abstention from cultivating and settling the country and the small number of Westerners who emigrated to the East. He also believed that these weaknesses, which led to the Crusaders' downfall, would be avoided by the Zionist movement. Actually, he even believed that Zionism excelled precisely in these two areas.

³² Ibid., 364.

In Part I of this book I dwelt extensively upon the role of geography in the process of expropriation of history, which accompanies the process of nation building. I claimed that national history is actually a deliberate choice of meaningful events which occurred within the limits of the national borders, and that it is a nation's geography that defines the variety of possibilities from which a national history is created. A national history therefore does not focus on sites and episodes that occurred abroad, because such a narrative is perceived as being irredentist and might arouse the ire of neighbouring nations against the new one that is shaping its own history on foreign soil.

But the diachronic concurrence of diverse and contrasting cultures on the same geographic territory may lead to surprising results. Thus, for example, Hittite history has become part of Turkish history even though there does not – and cannot – exist any ethnic or historical connection between the residents of modern Turkey and the ancient Hittites who used to inhabit that same territory. But the development of Hittite civilisation in Asia Minor, the same geographic area which later became the cradle of the modern Turkish national identity, made Hittite history part of the history of modern Turkey. In the same manner, Roman culture became a legitimate part of British history. Modern states are expected to preserve the archaeological and architectural remains of cultures that held sway in the same territory in the past even if that culture rests upon values opposed to those of the dominant contemporary culture, and the attitude towards Afghanistan after the destruction of the Buddhist statues is but one example. In many states, the age-old unrelated cultures of the past are transformed into 'golden ages' of the modern existing nation-states.

Crusader history was also transformed over the years in a similar way and became a legitimate chapter in the annals of the Holy Land, and by extension, of Israeli history. One expression of this process, as I have demonstrated above, is the manner in which the Zionist narrative adopted Crusader history not as a prefiguration, but as a sort of reverse prefiguration, a warning: 'See what they did, and avoid it, if you want to survive.' But, in any event, the Crusaders were turned into a legitimate part of local history and their archaeological remains took the form of visual representations of the country that influenced anyone who lives or has been educated in it during the past fifty years or so.³³ My own adolescent

³³ For recent studies in the historiography of the Crusades, reflecting 'Jewish' and 'Israeli' approaches see Kedar, 1998a, 1998b, 1999c, 2001.

memories include a hiking trip 'from sea to sea' (i.e., from the Mediterranean to the Sea of Galilee). I remember starting out, with a heavy backpack on my shoulders, on the first lap of the hike from the seashore to the Crusader fortress of Montfort. As the sun prepared to set we stopped at the top of one of the mountains to get a view of the fortress; the scenic sight that met our young eyes at the end of a tiring day was breathtaking. The steep cliffs, the dense forest, the gushing brook, and the threatening walls of the fortress left an indelible impression upon my mind and on the memory of all who shared that experience; those scenes have remained as objects of longing and as visual representations of 'the homeland'. Inadvertently, the Crusaders ceased to be hostile and violent foreigners who had conquered the land by force of arms, slaughtering Jews who happened to cross their path, and plundering ancient civilisations. They were transformed simply into another group of former inhabitants of the country, part of its history – or at least part of the history of the Israeli nation. The fact that the Crusaders had fought the Muslims made this conceptual transformation all the easier.

For me and for my generation of Israeli historians, the study of the Crusades is the study of the history of our country. This in itself is another transformation of the reading of Crusader history: from the 'Jewish' reading of its history, focusing on slaughter of the Rhineland Jewish communities in 1096, to a Zionist reading of the Crusades, focusing on seeing them as an inverse prefiguration of the future Zionist movement, and finally to the reading of the Crusades as part of my own country, and to a certain degree, as part of my own history.

Who invented the concentric castles?

Both varieties of the colonialist approach – the one which emphasises the European nature and origin of their achievements and the other that stressed the greater influence of the local inhabitants and the Levantine character of the Crusader states – came to the fore in the controversies over the source of the structures that are known as ‘concentric castles’ and of the counterweight trebuchet.¹

Rey's and Oman's colonialist approach

Emmanuel Guillaume Rey, who was the first to stress the concept of the merging of local and Frankish societies to form a joint colonialist one, was also the first to claim that the development of Crusader military architecture was influenced both by traditions of the Oriental-Byzantine fortress and the European *motte* and *bailey*.²

Rey, however, considered the local contribution to be the more important of the two. He claimed that the principles underlying the construction of Crusader fortresses were those already formulated in the sixth century by Procopius. Obviously, he did not contend that the Franks were familiar with the writings of Procopius but he did believe that the Crusaders, on their way to the Holy Land, had been able to comprehend and appreciate the principles of the concentric type of castles they encountered in Byzantium, and that later they were capable of implementing and even perfecting them. The improved concentric castles were later ‘exported’ to their countries of origin.

¹ Crusader castles are usually defined in a simplistic manner, emphasising the existence of multiple walls increasing in height outwards and the existence of protruding towers and different types of machicolations. The existence of a *chemin du ronde* is also presented as forming an important part of such structures.

² Rey, 1871, 9–10.

Rey had difficulty in pointing to specific Byzantine examples or in demonstrating how widespread was the concentric castle in eleventh-century Byzantine military architecture. He therefore based his empirical conclusions on sparse evidence, which included the plan of Constantinople itself and the results of one of the earliest surveys of later Byzantine architecture, made by Charles Texier during his visit to the city of Dara in 1840.³ Rey therefore based his theory not on observations or explicit texts but on a series of logical assumptions: he was convinced that concentric castles were unknown in the West prior to the Crusades, that they were already mentioned in sixth-century Byzantine military literature, and that such castles were built by the Franks during the twelfth century. Thus, it was logical to conclude that the Franks imitated the Byzantine style of architecture and adopted concentric patterns for their own fortresses.

Rey therefore assumed – an assumption accepted by almost all who followed him – that the Franks of the East combined the earlier concentric pattern, which they encountered in the East, with the one they brought with them from their homelands, and that this hybrid ‘concentric Crusader castle’ was ‘exported’ back to Europe. Rey unhesitatingly concluded that the construction of concentric castles in the East preceded the building of similar ones in the West and that the greatest Crusader fortresses such as those of Margat, Karak, and Tortosa, were more than twice the size of those at Coucy and Pierrefonds which were the largest then existent in France.

In Rey’s opinion, the Crusaders also borrowed some important principles of fortification from the West. Thus, for example, they constructed the most highly fortified building on the most vulnerable side and provided their castles with a *donjon* (a central fortified tower), features which were very common in contemporary France. On the other hand they added, according to Rey, certain attributes to the basic structural plan they brought with them from Europe. From the Byzantines they borrowed the second curtain wall, the inner one being higher than the exterior one to allow a line of fire for both of them and to enable warriors stationed atop both of them to join in the battle simultaneously. Rey also claimed that the *glacis*, of the type found at Karak, did not exist in France at the time and was a military architectural invention of the Crusaders themselves.

³ Texier and Popplewell, 1864, 57ff.

Rey distinguished, however, between Western-styled fortresses and those influenced primarily by Oriental architecture: he labelled the former 'Hospitaller castles', while the latter – those which he believed to be closest in style to the large Arab fortresses – he termed 'Templar castles'. The second type was characterised by square towers and deep moats that were sometimes filled with water (like those at Tortosa or 'Athlit), and even more important by their 'most Oriental style'. Only the Latin masons' marks he says, pointed to the Western origin of the builders of the 'Templar castles'.

Rey also refers to a third type, which he calls 'feudal fortresses', such as those found at Jubayl, Beaufort, Shaubak, Karak, Blanchgarde, and elsewhere. A fourth style, of which he mentions only one example, is the castle at Montfort that was 'imported' without change from the banks of the Rhine, while the fifth includes the urban fortifications at Caesarea and Ascalon. Rey found that many castles were influenced by Oriental construction, and did not rule out even some direct Muslim and not only Byzantine influences, particularly on the 'Templar fortresses'.⁴

The linear model, which claims that Crusader concentric castles originated from Byzantine precedents, and that at a later stage this innovative military architecture was 'exported' back to Europe, was reluctantly adopted by Sir Charles Oman (1860–1946), who was considered by the turn of the century as the greatest authority on military history. Oman, however, tended to overlook additional Oriental influences on the art of war in Europe; in fact, he went even farther in declaring that: 'If we can point to any modifications introduced into European warfare by the eastern experience of the Crusaders, they are not, with the exception of improvements in fortification, of any great importance.'⁵

THE EUROCENTRIC APPROACH OF THOMAS EDWARD LAWRENCE ('LAWRENCE OF ARABIA')

T. E. Lawrence (1888–1935) was the first to challenge the theories of the Eastern origin of the concentric castle, advanced by Rey and Oman. Already during his student days at Oxford he exhibited an interest in the Middle Ages. He was greatly influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement (though at a quite late stage of its existence) and by its leader William Morris. He was also deeply influenced by John Ruskin's *Stones*

⁴ Rey, 1871, 12–19, 15–17.

⁵ Oman, 1953, 72.

of Venice, which he received as a present on his eighteenth birthday. Lawrence was fascinated by the Gothic style, which also appealed to his mentors; like them, he believed in the moral meaning of architectural style and that the Gothic remains were actually the very foundation of Western civilisation.

But the teaching of the Arts and Crafts movement did not satisfy Lawrence. His temperament was unsuited to simply fostering medieval crafts *per se*. Lawrence, according to one of his biographers, developed a personal mode of medievalism in such a way that he became a sort of modern-day knight, trying to live a medieval way of life.⁶ His interest in the Crusades was certainly an important part of this general attitude. In his book on Crusader castles, actually written as a thesis for his degree at Jesus College, Oxford (partially replacing the final exams) he summarises the information gathered on a one-year study expedition to the East.⁷

There, for the first time, he sharply opposed the widely accepted theories developed by Rey, expressing outright rejection of the claim that the Crusader fortresses were developed along Oriental lines. He claimed that 'the Crusading architects were for many years copyists of the Western builders',⁸ that the Crusaders had brought with them from Europe all the knowledge necessary for the construction of fortresses, and that upon their return to their home countries they did not take with them any innovations in military architecture.

Lawrence did, however, accept Rey's differentiation between 'Templar' and 'Hospitaller' styles, attributing ideological significance to the alleged difference:

The Templars, always suspected of a leaning toward mysterious Eastern arts and heresies, took up the mantle of Justinian, as represented by the degenerate fortresses in Northern Syria, and amplified it, in making it more simple. The Hospitallers, in harmony with their more conservative tradition, drew their

⁶ '[T]he idea of a Crusade . . . revolved in his mind, giving rise to a dream Crusade, which implied a leader with whom in a sense he identified himself yet remained himself a sympathetic observer. Naturally, it would be a Crusade in the modern form – the freeing of a race from bondage.' Graves and Liddell Hart, 1963, II, 80.

⁷ Lawrence's thesis was originally entitled 'The Influence of the Crusades on European Military Architecture to the End of the Twelfth Century'. Various scholars, however, doubted Lawrence's credibility in this matter and claimed that he did not fully accomplish his survey. Stewart maintained, for example that Lawrence did not visit the cities of 'Urfa and Antioch although he describes them in his book, see Stewart, 1977, 61; Allen claims that Lawrence's descriptions are dependent on the plans prepared a year earlier by Pirie Gordon, see Allen, 1991, 30.

⁸ Lawrence, 1936, 56.

inspiration from the flourishing school of military architects in contemporary France.⁹

So great was his contempt for the 'degenerate Eastern fortresses' that influenced the Templar castle that he could not even find a word of praise for the castle at 'Athlit which had never fallen to the Muslims:

the Templars, working in 1218, threw aside all the carefully arranged schemes of flanking fire, all the covering works, all the lines of multiple defence which were being thought out meanwhile in Europe. At Athlit they relied on the one line of defence – an enormously thick wall, of colossal blocks of stone, with two scarcely projective rectangular towers upon it. These were the keeps, the master towers of the fortress, and instead of being cunningly arranged where they would be least accessible they are placed across the danger line, to bear the full brunt of the attack. One would expect them to be unusually massive . . . The design is simply unintelligent, a reworking of the old ideas of Procopius, only half understood . . . Given unlimited time and labour, anyone can make a ditch so deep and a wall so high of stones so heavy as to be impregnable: but such a place is as much a prison for its defenders as a refuge: in fact a stupidity. Such is Athlit.¹⁰

Lawrence writes in such a resolute manner that the reader who is unacquainted with the plan of 'Athlit does not suspect that there is absolutely no connection between his downright assertions and reality. The fact that Lawrence was writing before the site of 'Athlit was excavated could not be an excuse: the fortifications were exposed well before the diggings.

Lawrence, writes Allen, had no choice but to play down this fortress in order to bolster his own claim that the plans of all the amazing Crusader fortresses were influenced by Western architecture and that the inspired military engineers who constructed them were all Latins.¹¹ Above all, he admired Richard Lion Heart to whom he attributed the most sophisticated patterns of medieval castle building:

There is no evidence that Richard borrowed anything, great or small, from any fortress which he saw in the Holy Land: it is not likely that he would do so, since he would find better examples of everything in that South of France which he knew so well. There is not a trace of anything Byzantine in the ordinary French castle, or in any English one: while there are evident signs that all that was good in Crusading architecture hailed from France or Italy.¹²

Lawrence, says Richard Aldington, was not a man of scientific scholarship, though the public image that he himself nurtured was of a

⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 42–43.

¹¹ Allen, 1991, 32.

¹² Lawrence, 1936, 56.

self-taught person and an expert on the Middle Ages.¹³ Lawrence, for example, told his first biographer, Robert Graves, that when he was a student at Oxford, he spent most of his time reading Provençal poetry and French medieval *chansons de geste*, instead of preparing for the final exams and reading the assigned books. This, he said, was the reason for his initial failure in the final exams (after writing his thesis, however, he got a first class degree).¹⁴ That same year he made a similar disclosure to another of his biographers, military historian Basil Liddell Hart, to whom he related: 'I also read nearly every manual of chivalry. Remember: that my "period" was the Middle Ages, always.'¹⁵ Aldington, who distrusted Lawrence's stories, checked his library and discovered that it did not contain even one Provençal text and the only *chansons de geste* found there were translations into modern French. Lawrence says, he wrote, that 'he "read all the Manuals of Chivalry." Where are they? . . . You will rightly infer from this that I strongly suspect even Lawrence's erudition to be largely bogus.'¹⁶ One might add unrealistic descriptions of the fortress at 'Athlit to such statements of puzzlement.

Yet, it would be a mistake to completely dismiss Lawrence's contribution to research on the Crusader period. His book on Crusader castles is replete with evasive statements in which the British nationalist and colonialist discourses are incorporated into the historiography and archaeology of the Crusades. Lawrence, who yearned for the Middle Ages and lived his own life as if he were a medieval knight, believed that the Crusaders were Europeans who carried with them the modern technologies of the time. His fundamental approach dictated, above all, a patronising attitude towards the fortresses constructed by the local inhabitants. He even accepted literally Rey's groundless claim that Crusader fortresses could be divided into superior Hospitaller ones (because they were influenced by Western technologies), and the inferior 'Templar castles' influenced by the Oriental style of construction. Lawrence succeeded in

¹³ Aldington had a very unfavourable opinion of Lawrence, whom he described as being 'phoney from start to finish', 'filthy little lying bugger', and even 'lazy little bastard'. His very critical, even vicious, biography of Lawrence should therefore be read with caution. See Aldington, 1971 [1969]; cf. also MacNiven, and Moore, 1981, 7 and 20; Benkovits, 1975, 80.

¹⁴ Graves and Liddell Hart, 1963, I, 48: 'Oxford. At Jesus read history, officially: actually spent nearly three years reading Provençal poetry, and Mediaeval French chansons de geste. When time came for degree wasn't prepared for exam. So went Syria in last long vacation (4 months) tramped from Haifa to Urfa, seeing 50 Crusader castles. Came back Oxford sketch plans photos of every mediaeval fortress in Syria, and wrote thesis. Got 1st Class Honours degree . . .'

¹⁵ Graves and Liddell Hart, 1963, II, 50.

¹⁶ Aldington, 1971, 67; see also Benkovits, 1975, 41.

making this theory part of the historiographical outlook that claimed absolute supremacy of the West in all that pertained to the construction of fortresses and weaponry, and also as part of the concealed nationalist outlook that attributed the highest level of such construction to the reign of the 'English' king, Richard Lion Heart.

THE ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRANKISH CASTLES: THE ACCEPTED VIEWPOINT

The controversy aroused by Rey in the 1870s still reverberates in modern research: the issue concerning the 'Oriental' or 'Western' origin of the Crusader concentric castles is repeatedly dealt with in many studies.

Modern scholars who accept the theory of Oriental influence elaborated Rey's contention that the Crusaders were directly influenced by Byzantine architecture, especially by the Theodosian triple wall of Constantinople. Many of them believe, however, that Byzantine influence was not exerted directly; rather, it reached the Franks by means of Islamic and Armenian architectural traditions.¹⁷ Denys Pringle, for example, combines the various interpretations. Western architecture did play some role, he believes, but it was a combination of Roman and Byzantine fortresses, as well as Islamic and Armenian traditions, that influenced the fortresses erected by the Franks. Hugh Kennedy, while careful not to indicate direct Byzantine influence on Crusader construction, does claim that 'the connections with Armenian work are clearer'. He, too, is of the opinion that there is evidence of Muslim influence on Crusader military construction.¹⁸

The prevailing consensus among most of the scholars (including those mentioned above and including the author of the present book) is that some of the Frankish architectural traditions and building skills were brought from their countries of origin, and particularly from Norman- and French-ruled regions and that the Crusader castles are but one stage in the development of the European castles. It is common also to claim that the Franks further developed their earlier castles, based on Norman traditions of castle building, and later brought the newly acquired knowledge back to the West. The Crusader castles are therefore regarded as

¹⁷ Eydoux, 1982, 246–48; and to a lesser extent, Pringle in Lawrence, 1988; and Pringle, 1989; Bianquis, 1992; and Edwards, 1987.

¹⁸ Pringle, in Lawrence, 1988, xxiv–xxvii; Kennedy, 1994, 11–20, exp. 18.

the instigators of the later developments in Norman, English, and French castle building.¹⁹

Even those scholars who do find Oriental influences on Crusader military architecture see the development of the Crusader castles as no more than a stage in the linear evolution that began already in the eleventh century and reached its apogee at the end of the thirteenth. Four phases are usually discerned in this linear process:

(a) *Motte with wooden keep and fenced bailey*. The earliest stage was typical mainly of the eleventh- and twelfth-century 'Norman' fortresses: the castle was composed of a man-made hill (the *motte*), surmounted by a wooden tower (the *keep*) and containing a fenced-off complex (the *bailey*), surrounded usually by a deep defensive trench.²⁰

(b) *Stone towers*. In the second stage, stone towers, similar to the wooden ones, gradually replaced the earlier wooden towers and thicker walls replaced the wooden fences.

(c) *Development of a better keep*: During the third phase the castles were adapted to the new tactical requirements: round or polygonal towers replaced the ancient keeps, providing the fortresses with a better defence capability, and the walls were further fortified by machicolations and *glacis*. Rounded towers provided the defenders with a better defence because they did not leave unprotected corners and dead areas. The stage of transition from primitive to more developed keeps occurred in England and western France under the Plantagenets between 1160 and 1180, and only later in Louis Philippe's France.²¹ In any event the change was slow and gradual; the tower of York, for instance, was still made of wood when it was set ablaze during the anti-Jewish riots of 1190. The tower built during the reign of Richard I to replace it was also a wooden tower, and was only replaced by a stone one during the later half of the thirteenth century. The adaptation of round and polygonal plans for the castles was also gradual. Henry II still built the tower of Dover along a rectangular plan as late as 1180, while the towers of Gisors²² and Château Gaillard

¹⁹ Deschamps, 1934, 1939; Johns, 1947; Deschamps, 1964, 13–28; Fedden and Thomson, 1957, 11–12; Müller-Wiener, 1966, 8.

²⁰ Brown, Colvin, and Taylor, 1963, 69–80; Enlart, 1932, 556; Châtelain, 1973; Brown, 1969, 1976; Thompson, 1991, 1992.

²¹ The earliest transitional keep is Henry II's in Orford (1166–72) but it has parallels on the continent, such as the twelfth-century tower in Gisors. See Brown, Colvin, and Taylor, 1963, 71; Mesqui and Toussaint, 1990; Héliot, 1974.

²² The tower of Gisors was built by Henry II in 1161, although it is related in the following document to Henry I: 'Henericus rex . . . In margine etiam ducatus Normannie, fere omnia sua castella, et maxime Gisorz, melioravit vel renovavit'; Robert de Torigni, 1, 331.

(built by Richard I), already adopted the new style.²³ It seems that stone castles appeared on the continent earlier than in the British Isles, and that their development was accompanied by the development of non-military functions within the castle. The most important non-military building was the Hall, which served as a centre for the social and administrative activities, but also for other functions such as the residence for the castellan, kitchens, store-rooms and stables and there were other structures that served for other functions as well.²⁴

(d) *Concentric castles*: The development of the 'concentric castle' has been described as the last stage in the development of the medieval European castle. According to Colvin, the first concentric castle was created by the addition of a second external wall ('*enceinte*') to an already fortified and enclosed castle. Therefore, he dates the appearance of the first concentric castle in England and Europe to the addition of another *enceinte* to the keep of Dover, in 1181–82, during the reign of Henry II.²⁵ Colvin refers to Richard I's great fortress in Château Gaillard as a concentric castle, although it was built without an internal keep, and the entire castle was actually planned as one big keep.²⁶ Concentric castles reached their highest state of perfection in those constructed by Edward I at Beaumaris and at Harlech, in northern Wales, during the late thirteenth century.²⁷

It is possible therefore to summarise, and to state that there is only one basic research question that is still debated today, more than one hundred years after the publication of Rey's article. This question, however, could be formulated in two different ways:

(a) Who invented the concentric castle? Is it possible to accept Rey's opinion and claim that we should look for the origin of the concentric castles in Byzantine military architecture, or is it better to prefer Lawrence's claim, that the architectural origin of this type of castle should be sought in the West? In any event, it is possible to divide all the studies which were published since 1870 and to associate them with one or the other point of view. One school prefers the idea of a merging of the Eastern and Western cultures and technologies, while the other preaches

²³ Mesqui and Toussaint, 1990; Coutil, 1928; Dieulafoy, 1898.

²⁴ For the development of Henri II's stone keeps in France and Normandy and the towers constructed during his reign in England see Enlart, 1932, II, 556; Héliot, 1969.

²⁵ Brown, Colvin, and Taylor, 1963, 78–81; Brown, 1955, 390.

²⁶ Héliot, 1964.

²⁷ Brown, Colvin, and Taylor, 1963; Héliot, 1965; Mesqui, 1991.

European superiority in the art of military construction already in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

(b) The spheres of influence: the possibility of mutual influences between Europe and the Frankish settlers in the East was also raised by Rey, who believed in reciprocal influences. He also argued that the basic plan of the castle was brought by the Crusaders from Europe, and that they improved upon it by learning from local models and later exported the ameliorated castle back to Europe. The Eurocentric school in this matter, established by Lawrence, accepted the linear model, while denying any possibility of Eastern ameliorations or the export of Eastern ideas to Europe. Crusader castles were either imported Western ideas or Eastern dead ends. The builders in the West had nothing to learn from their Eastern colleagues.

It is difficult not to see the resemblance between the debate over the origin of the 'Crusader castles' and that over the origin of Gothic art, which preoccupied art historians and archaeologists during the nineteenth century. In both cases the scholarly disputes were over the possibility of Oriental influence on the development of what were considered emblematic *European* icons (the *Medieval Castle* and the *Gothic Cathedral*). In both cases there were scholars who believed that the marriage of East and West was a very fertile one and contributed greatly to the advance of both East and West, while a different school minimised the possibility that the non-European world contributed to the development of Western culture. Kennedy, trying to reconcile the two opposing views, claimed that:

Even a brief survey . . . shows clearly that the Crusaders who came to settle and build in the Levant had experience of a large number of different castle types in their homelands. Furthermore, they were used to adapting designs to local terrains. They needed no eastern masters to show them how to build a curtain wall along the crest of the ridge . . . But this did not mean that they had nothing to learn from eastern techniques.²⁸

Pringle, trying to be more practical, suggested a comprehensive comparative survey of medieval castles. Only when the styles of Muslim, Armenian, Greek, and Western castles are known to us will it be possible to answer the question concerning the origin of Crusader castles. Pringle, therefore, avoids answering the question which has puzzled those studying Crusader castles from the 1870s onwards.

²⁸ Kennedy, 1994, 14.

In the following chapters I will try to raise an alternative agenda for the study of the Frankish castles. I believe, that the traditional questions on the origin of the castles and the possible directions of influence are too narrow, and that even if we follow Pringle's suggestion it will lead us to a dead end. The question of who influenced whom is more subjective than it seems, and even the very important accumulation of relevant data might not solve the problem. In any event, even today the difficulty in reaching an answer does not arise from a lack of information but from the nature of the questions themselves.

Other questions, such as the real meaning of the term 'Crusader castle' and the differences between 'castle', 'city', and 'village', are more fundamental, and therefore more relevant to an understanding of the very essence of Frankish settlement in general. If we succeed, for example, in portraying the real nature of the Frankish frontier, we might be able to reexamine the accepted theory, which connects castles and fortifications. Another possibility is to reassess the hidden dialogue which always exists between the builders of the castles, who tried to make their fortifications as impregnable as possible, and those who were looking for any method to destroy them. A better study of the spatial distribution of the castles, or a better understanding of their architectural evolution, are much more important and more relevant for an understanding of the Frankish castles, than the accumulation of data in Europe or elsewhere.

However, the questions of origin of the castles and of the direction of influence were not the only questions which were modified by a similar colonialist way of thinking. In the following chapters I will present some other questions which show once more that too many students of the Crusades indulged for too many years in questions which emanated from colonialist and Eurocentric approaches.

*'Crusader cities', 'Muslim cities', and the
post-colonial debate*

The two approaches, one which emphasises the influence of the European legacy on the Frankish settlements in the East, and the other which stresses the importance of the Levantine heritage on Frankish building activities, are manifested once again in the controversy over the origin of the 'Crusader city'.

Most of the scholars who traced the origins of the Frankish city pointed to the resemblances between the Frankish urban centres and their contemporary European counterparts, but many of them encountered enormous conceptual difficulties with the application of the Western model to the Frankish city and in their attempt to differentiate between 'cities', 'castles', or 'villages'.¹ But here, too, it was Joshua Prawer who raised a stimulating alternative by pointing out the importance of the Eastern tradition in the creation of the 'Crusader cities'.² Prawer puts forth his ideas in a comprehensive study, which once again presents his all-inclusive historiographic approach, and his assertion that the Franks abstained from settling the countryside for reasons of security. He does not distinguish between fortified and unwallled cities, asserting that life in a Levantine city – any city – was safer and more comfortable than life in any Eastern village.

The Franks, he maintains, did not establish new cities during the two centuries of their rule in the Levant. They adopted the classical and Muslim cities and settled in them, while launching a process of rapid urbanisation: 'The creation of the Crusaders' city-settlement and city population', he says, 'was conditioned and defined by the intrusion of a mainly agricultural and village-dwelling society into a country where the city had been for centuries an established and central institution.'³ The

¹ Ehrlich, 2000, 24–51; Pringle, 1995, 71; 1997, 3–5; Lopez, 1966; Fossier, 1989, II: *Structures et problèmes*, 982; Reynolds, 1997, 156–57; Hilton, 1992, 6–7.

² Prawer, 1977a.

³ Prawer, 1980c, 102.

existing cities provided for the settlers' economic, administrative, and ecclesiastical needs. Even military needs were met by the existing cities or by the newly established fortresses. The castles, adds Prawer, were also built upon existing infrastructures, at locations that from the dawn of history were famous for their geopolitical or strategic advantages. The Franks relied on the existence of water resources and building materials at these spots to ease the work of reconstruction. Therefore, the spatial distribution of the Frankish fortresses was very similar, if not identical, to that of the older ones.

Prawer refrained from defining the 'medieval European city' or the 'Crusader' city, but by adopting the approach that 'Crusader cities' are, to all intents and purposes, no more than earlier Roman-Byzantine and Muslim ones he hinted at a stronger Eastern rather than Western influence on the Frankish way of life.

To this approach, however, he added several qualifications and restrictions, moderating his own initial statement that Crusader cities were not created but inherited from their predecessors.

Half-built cities: Prawer mentions that even though the Franks did not establish new cities, they did, however, significantly narrow the settled area of the existing ones and allowed only the building space needed for the new Frankish population, which was considerably smaller than the former native one. This process was crucial especially during the kingdom's early years, when it was difficult to settle the entire area of the cities. Thus, for example, the Franks occupied only one of Jerusalem's quarters and only parts of the urban areas enclosed by the walls of Ramla⁴ or Gaza.⁵

Enlarged cities: More established cities, such as Nablus,⁶ Jaffa,⁷ and Acre, were extended by the addition of new quarters or *burgi*.

Castral burgi: The efforts entailed in the establishment of new quarters adjacent to large fortresses were very similar, in Prawer's opinion, to those required for the establishment of new cities. 'Athlit and Safad, for instance, are examples of the 'development of small cities around restored castles'.⁸

⁴ The city was abandoned when taken in 1099 and was most probably destroyed once more during the Muslim siege of 1102, Fulcher of Chartres, 427; William of Tyre, 10, 16 (17), 472; Albert of Aachen, v, 42, 461; Mayer, 1985; cf. Ehrlich, 2000, 139–43.

⁵ William of Tyre, 12, 43, 776; 20, 20, 938; Jacques of Vitry, 1, 40, 1070.

⁶ Ehrlich, 2000, 223–27; for a *novo burgo* in Nablus see Holy Sepulchre, no. 146, 1168, 85; no. 147, 288–89.

⁷ Pringle, 1993, 1, 264–67.

⁸ Prawer, 1977a, 182.

It was probably clear to Prawer, too, that there are many Western equivalents to these limitations. Partial rebuilding and partial desertion of ancient cities due to lack of manpower or security were almost universal in the European High Middle Ages. It is even easier to find European parallels to the addition of new *burgi* to over-crowded cities. Moreover, as a disciple of Richard Koebner, he should have been aware of the fact that the *burgus* of 'Athlit or the 'small city' of Safad would have been labelled 'new cities' anywhere in Europe.⁹ Prawer, however, does not explain this discrepancy, and while claiming that no new cities were built during the Frankish reign he describes the creation of several of them.

Prawer presents a very clear model of the pre-Crusader Oriental city inherited by the Franks. According to this model the earlier cities had typical layouts and typical principal establishments, which continued to exist and maintain their functions and locations after the Frankish conquest. He indicates four such functions:

The location of religious establishments: Muslim mosques were transformed into Frankish churches, contributing to continuity in the spatial distribution of sanctuaries. The most important examples are the sanctuaries of Jerusalem, where the Friday mosque in Haram al-Sharif became the Templar church of Templum Salomonis and Qubbat al-Sakhrah was transformed into the church of Templum Domini, but this was not unique, for the 'Regis Bafumaria' (King's Mosque) of Tripoli was also transformed into a church as early as 1109, and the 'Green Mosque' of Ascalon became the church of Sancta Maria Cathara after the conquest of that city in 1154.

Citadels: According to this model, the Muslim citadel, which also included the residence of the city's ruler and military commander and was the military and administrative centre of the city, continued to perform the same functions during the Frankish reign. Prawer, who refers primarily to the alleged citadels of Jerusalem and Acre, also notes the picturesque description of the palace in Beirut by Wilbrand of Oldenburg in the early thirteenth century.¹⁰

Bazaars and other centres of economic activity. Customs houses continued to operate at the city's gates as did the old marketplaces.¹¹ New markets, says Prawer, were not established during the Crusader period,

⁹ Koebner, 1941, 1-91 (and 1966).

¹⁰ 'In one of those towers, *newly constructed*, we saw a most beautifully decorated palace. . . ' Wilibrandus de Oldenburg, 166-67; Prawer, 1972, 450-51.

¹¹ See also Hospital, no. 27, 1120, 88-89; Abbot Daniel, in Khitrovo, 17.

and those of Acre were exceptions that prove the rule. However, the Franks did establish new pigsties and pig markets, because the Muslims would not have raised and marketed pigs for religious reasons, but even these 'new markets' were actually old cattle markets adjusted to their new roles.

Hammams (bath-houses), ovens, and other public services: The Franks generally refrained from building new ovens. 'Though such an installation is not too complicated to build, the existing furns (*sic*) which dotted the city served the Crusaders' needs well.'¹² Prawer has much of the same to say about the Crusader baths (*balnea*), expensive installations whose construction called for expert builders and for water to be brought to the city by means of an aqueduct. The Franks, therefore, preferred to use the old Arab baths. Only when the increase in population exceeded the capacity of the existing ones, as was the case in a few Crusader cities in the thirteenth century, did they construct new bathing facilities.

This is how Prawer sums up his view of the continuity in the Crusader cities' layout:

Visualize a map showing the physical features of the Arab city – the line of walls, the location of citadel and palace, the major mosques and Christian sanctuaries, the marketplaces, baths, and bakeries. If we superimpose on such a plan a map of the Crusader city, we will find an amazing correspondence between the two.¹³

This theory would be much more convincing if we had some knowledge of the physiognomy of the 'early Muslim city' which, it is claimed, was taken over and used by the Crusader conquerors. Unfortunately, the data available to Prawer did not differ much from that which is at our disposal today; even now we know very little about the early Muslim topography of Jerusalem and Acre, and almost nothing about any other city.

Prawer was undoubtedly conscious of the fact that scholars know almost nothing about the pre-Crusader layout of the Levantine cities. He therefore limits his own definition by saying: 'At the current stage of research . . . we have a rather rich amount of data for the Crusader period, whereas for the earlier period data is scarce and studies almost non-existent.'¹⁴ In the Hebrew version of his article, published a decade later, Prawer would add: 'I believe that research on the earlier periods will have to base itself, to no small degree, upon the data assembled from the Crusader period.'¹⁵

¹² Prawer, 1977a, 186; Hospital, no. 26, III4, 87.

¹³ Prawer, 1977a, 186.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Prawer, 1987, p. 18.

Prawer, therefore, claims that the main features of the typical earlier city remained the same, that the places of worship were not razed, and that the cities' fortifications, citadels, and public services remained unchanged, as if nothing had happened as a result of the Frankish conquest and as if the early Muslim topography of all the cities is well known to us.

His assertions about the medieval population of these cities are of even greater geographical and historical significance. Prawer believed that there was no continuity in the urban population and that the earlier population ceased to exist, but that the new population, which represented a new culture, continued to function in the same physical surroundings as that which it replaced and to retain the same functions at the same locations. Here, too, after making his general statement he adds qualifications, which moderate the model.

Partial continuity of the local population: The majority of the former Muslim population vanished in the wake of the conquest, whether as a result of slaughter, expulsion, or voluntary exile. However, a fraction of the minority of the former population, consisting mainly of Oriental – Greek Orthodox, Syrian, or Jacobite – Christians who wished to return to their former places of residence, were welcomed by the new rulers. Some Oriental Christians were even brought to Jerusalem from Trans-Jordan and settled in the former Jewish quarter. Therefore, there was indeed a partial continuity in the former population.

The creation of totally new urban neighbourhoods by the Italian communes: The quarters of the Italian communes were redesigned, to a certain extent, to meet the different civic needs of the foreign population which wanted to establish its own institutions. These institutions, however, were not much different from those existing primarily in ancient cities: 'They always request the grant of a *ruga* or *platea* (or both), *funda*, *ecclesia*, *furnus*, and *balneum*', whether because such components were considered essential for the existence of a self-sufficient Mediterranean quarter, or because the experience gained by Italian traders made them seem vital.

What, then, are the differences which Joshua Prawer did discern between the earlier Muslim city and the Crusader city?

- (1) The major difference lies in the fact that the Muslim city had one central authority and was not divided up into autonomous enclaves. Consequently, the city was organised on a functional basis: the number of bazaars and markets, baths, and ovens, as well as the location of the Friday mosque, corresponded to the unified needs of the population.

- (2) In contrast, in many cases the Crusader city was no longer a unified administrative and economic entity, as it had been under Muslim rule. The Mediterranean communes and the military orders had their own autonomous quarters, sort of 'micro-cities'. Thus, there emerged in Acre autonomous markets and streets with their own unique weights and measures and separate systems of taxation. The major outcome of the establishment of the new markets was the reduction in size – or even complete disappearance – of the central bazaars and their functional specialisation. The city's economic activity changed as it adapted to the new physical framework resulting from the preferential status of the new quarters.

How can one resolve the repeated discrepancy between Prawer's one claim – that the Franks inherited and retained the layout of the early Muslim city, which was organised along unified functional economic and administrative lines, and the other contradicting assertion – that the 'Crusader city' was split up into autonomous components, each of which maintained its own municipal and economic institutions? Prawer himself tried to resolve it, admitting that the splitting up into autonomous quarters was limited to the major seaports of Acre and Tyre, while Jerusalem and the other inland cities, such as Nablus and Tiberias, remained united under the sovereignty of the king or their lord; in these cities the markets and bazaars, as well as places of worship and citadels, continued to function in their original locations. But this restriction does not resolve the inconsistencies of the model. There is no real archaeological evidence, nor are there explicit texts that could confirm a model which depicts the Crusader cities as preserving their ancient characteristics despite the introduction of a different population with different cultural and physical needs. Prawer himself, however, was cautious enough to add more and more reservations and qualifications to his own model, but the solution for the inconsistencies must be sought elsewhere.

In my opinion, Prawer's model of Crusader cities was greatly influenced by the earlier and much more influential model of the 'Muslim City'. The earlier model was developed, refined, and formulated between the end of the 1920s and the mid 1950s, and became the subject of a great post-colonial controversy since the end of the 1970s.¹⁶

¹⁶ For good introductions to the model and to its critics, see Wirth, 1975; Abu-Lughod, 1987; Çelik, 1999.

The framework of this model was defined as early as 1928, when French scholar William Marçais pointed out the three main attributes of the archetypical 'Muslim city': the central mosque, the central markets or *bazaars*, and the public baths or *hammams*.¹⁷ His brother George Marçais, who also worked in the Maghrib, elaborated upon this model by indicating the differentiation which exists between commercial and residential quarters, the ethnic segregation of different groups within the city, and the hierarchical order and specialisation of trades.¹⁸ The two brothers made very little reference to the social organisation of such an archetypical city or to any institutional structure. Other scholars who followed them referred mainly to 'Muslim cities that were developed spontaneously', basing this evidence, too, on studies they conducted in the Maghrib.¹⁹

Jean Sauvaget, in his research on the urban history of Aleppo and Damascus, added another Middle Eastern layer to the model which was defined in the Maghrib. Referring to the transformation of the former Roman cities into Muslim ones, he contended that the organised structure of the ancient cities had already begun to fall apart during the Byzantine period, but that the major changes came under Muslim domination.²⁰ Sauvaget, who accepted the differentiation between Muslim cities that grew out of Byzantine ones and those which had developed spontaneously, argued, however, that some of the main attributes of the Islamicised cities were inherited from Byzantine precedents. The Muslim bazaar, for example, which became a basic element in the typical Muslim city, developed from the Byzantine colonnaded market. Sauvaget believed that other physical components also had their roots in earlier times: the mosque replaced the church in the city forum, and the citadel, which had been built on the highest and most domineering spot, continued to exist at the same location.

The model of the Muslim city was finally formulated by Gustave von Grunebaum, an immigrant from Nazi Germany who settled in the USA. Von Grunebaum was the first to spread the model amongst the English readership, and his role in its development is somewhat over-emphasised. He was attacked therefore, more furiously than his predecessors, by the partisans of the post-colonial trend. Von Grunebaum supports an institutional approach to the definition of cities. He starts his study of Muslim

¹⁷ Marçais, 1928.

¹⁸ Marçais, G., 1940, 1945.

¹⁹ Marçais, G., 1945, 517–18. Roger Le-Tourneau extended the model by adding the example of Fez. See Le Tourneau, 1949; 1957; for spontaneously developing cities, see Pauty, 1950.

²⁰ Sauvaget, 1934, 1941.

cities by quoting two references which strengthen this approach: in the first quotation, taken from Pausanias' *Description of Greece*, the author complains that a certain locality named Panopeus is described as a *polis*, although it has no administrative buildings, no gymnasium, no theatre, no marketplace, and no water flowing in pipes. The second quotation is from Yaqut al-Rumi, referring to al-Hariri (d. 1122) who described the city of Barqa'id as the *qasaba* (meaning a fortified capital) of al-Jazira in Mesopotamia. Barqa'id, writes Yaqut, is no *qasaba*, it did not even attain the status of *madina*; at best it is a village (*qarya*). The basis for Yaqut's criticism, according to von Grunebaum, was the lack of institutions which define a city, or a metropolitan city: a Friday mosque and a permanent market (to which Von Grunebaum added a *hammam*).²¹

The tradition of defining a city according to the existence or absence of certain institutions is almost as old as the opposite one, which bases such definitions on sociological and anthropological approaches. The 'institutional school' is best exemplified in Vitruvius' *De architectura libri decem* (Ten books on architecture) or in Alberti's *De Re Aedificatoria*. Both treatises ignore the sociological order altogether and establish the description and definition of cities on the existence of institutions, the shape they took, and their accessibility. The other approach, which founded such definitions on the basis of society, morals, and the competence of the rulers, is best exemplified in Plato's *Republic* or in More's *Utopia*.

Von Grunebaum's model resolved the seeming differences between the model presented by Jean Sauvaget, based on examples from the eastern Mediterranean, and the model proposed by the brothers Marçais, by pointing to the continuity of four urban components which define the Muslim city: the mosque which retains the site of the former church (he refers to the Friday mosque, which in certain cases retains the site of the former cathedral), the bazaar which perpetuates the Byzantine colonnaded street, the city grid which, like the ancient Roman city, was comprised of two straightly intersecting streets; and the citadel or stronghold on the outskirts of the city.

As argued before, the model was not created by von Grunebaum; even the institutional approach is age-old, but von Grunebaum formulated the more developed version of the model by adding more attributes of

²¹ Von Grunebaum, 1955, 141, quotes from Yaqut al Rumi, *Mu'jam al-buldan* (*Yaqut's Geographisches Wörterbuch*), ed. F. Wüstenfeld, 1–VI, Leipzig, 1866–73, I, 5, lines 20–21.

his own, such as the inwardly oriented nature of the households, and the circulation network, based on narrow irregular streets leading to segregated residential quarters.²²

Von Grunebaum, however, did refer to sociological attributes, claiming that the typical Muslim city, unlike its contemporary Western counterparts, did not have any corporative civic organisation. This lack, he believed, was compensated for by ethnic and tribal communal organisations and by the existence of widely accepted local leaders – the sheikhs. The absence of Muslim municipal structures, or of any other counterpart to the structure of the European city, was depicted by the supporter of the model in terms of irregularity which could lead to chaos. Some of Von Grunebaum's predecessors tried to find a solution for this 'absence'. Louis Massignon, for example, claimed that social solidarity among the Muslims was created by guild-like commercial bodies, and Robert Brunschvig argued that Islamic law and religion played important roles in structuring the typical Muslim city, functioning as a Muslim substitute for the civic structure of the contemporaneous European cities.²³

Scholars who followed Von Grunebaum, such as Berque, De-Planhol, Jairazbhoy, and Ismail, contributed to the modification of the model, but did not abandon it. Therefore, most of the basic ideas of this model remained undisputed until the beginning of the 1970s.²⁴

The controversy over the validity of this model was triggered when Edward Said published his *Orientalism* in 1978, evoking an important post-colonial debate. Said and his followers criticised the model for being stereotypical, for attempting to define all the features of the city as being by-products of all-embracing Islam or the ever-existing 'tribal society'. The 'Orientalists' were blamed for ignoring the importance of society, economy, and civic traditions and for basing their definitions on institutions alone. The Orientalist's way of examining 'Muslim cities', say their critics, is to compare their outward attributes with the contemporary 'European cities'. The Western city was conceived by them, say the

²² Von Grunebaum, 1955; Al-Sayyad, 1991, 13.

²³ Brunschvig, 1947; Massignon, 1937.

²⁴ Jacques Berque referred already in 1958 to the anti-colonialist urban manifestations as a background to his study of the 'Muslim city' which describes the Muslim city as a place for witness and an arena for exchange, Berque, 1958, 5 and 13; De Planhol, 1959, 23; Hamdan, 1962; Jairazbhoy, 1965, 59–60; Monier, 1971; Ismail, 1969, as abstracted in *Ekistics* 195 (1972), 113–23, defined an 'inner core' (an idea which was very popular among urban geographers in the late 1960s), consisting of a Friday mosque, a city square (*maidan*), markets, baths, and a government house. This inner core was surrounded by residential quarters, walls, open markets, and industry.

critics, as representing the 'perfect medieval city' while the qualities of the 'Muslim city' are weighted according to its similarities or dissimilarities with the Western one. A medieval Muslim city was considered, therefore, an imperfect city, because it lacked features attributed to the perfect Western one.

The post-colonial critics refer to Max Weber's widely accepted theory of 'the city' discerning five characteristic elements of the medieval city: corporative social organisation, fortification, markets, a legal and administrative system, and partial autonomy. The attempt to uncover Muslim parallels to the Western social and urban structure led the Orientalists to compare mosques, bazaars, and baths with equivalent European establishments and to prove that the Muslim cities are not true cities, because they lack major components characteristic of Western cities.²⁵

Von Grunebaum's interpretation was the target of direct and explicit attack by Abdullah Laroui, and Edward Said, who referred to '[von Grunebaum's] almost virulent dislike of Islam'.²⁶ They believed that von Grunebaum had projected a 'reduced portrait' of Islam as a closed, unchanging framework that results from a certain view of the Deity, one that enforces discipline and order upon everything. Said claims that von Grunebaum presents a political model which argues that tradition and reality go hand in hand in Islam, a model that categorically declares that in order to improve, Islam must adopt Western methods. He further affirms that the creators of the Orientalist model – Gibb, Massignon, and von Grunebaum – have become the founders of a wider school of scholars who followed them until the late 1960s.²⁷ Whether as individuals or as a group, the Orientalists hold a specific conception of the 'Orient' as an entity which by definition is different from the 'Occident'. In their eyes, says Said, the Orient is mysterious, unchanging, and absolutely inferior. He makes the charge that this type of Orientalism has become so influential in academic institutions that scholars of Oriental origin who wanted to deal academically with aspects of Muslim civilisation were forced to toe the line and prefer the Western definition of Orientalism to their own social consciousness.²⁸

²⁵ For narratives of the debate and for attempts to produce 'post-colonial' histories, see Abu-Lughod, 1987; Alsayyad, 1991, 1996; Tolmacheva, 1995; Çelik, 1999; Stewart, 1999; Reilly, 1999.

²⁶ Said, 1978, 296; Laroui, 1974.

²⁷ Gibb, 1931, 1947, 1949 and many more; for the œuvre of Massignon, see Massignon, 1963, for example; Massignon, 'L'Occident devant l'Orient: Primauté d'une solution culturelle', *Opera Minora*, 1, 208–23.

²⁸ For Said's interpretation of Von Grunebaum, see Said, 1978, 296–98.

In any event, the four central features of the 'Orientalist model of the Muslim city' are exactly those that also appear in Prawer's 'Crusader city': the mosque – which in Prawer's model was transformed once again, this time into a church; the central marketplace – remaining at the same location and retaining its former functions; the unchanging citadel; and the bathhouses (*hammams*). All these attributes were accepted by all developers of the Muslim model, both in the Maghrib and in the East, as defining a typical Muslim city and were accepted also by Joshua Prawer when defining his 'Crusader city'.

There is no doubt that Prawer, like practically all of his contemporaries, was influenced by the model of the 'Muslim city', and that the model of the 'Crusader city' which he developed was to a large extent an adaptation of the former. It is not surprising, therefore, that Prawer did not find any difficulty in the alleged similarity of the earlier city to the Frankish one. Basing his references to the layout of the early city mainly on the example of Jerusalem, Prawer accepted Sauvaget's interpretation as a proven fact. Jerusalem, it is true, retained its Byzantine layout, but it probably maintained its local Christian (Byzantine) population as well. But is it possible to deduce from the layout of Jerusalem the plan and functions of other cities? We have to admit that our knowledge of the cities of the Levant is very limited and that our understanding of Frankish urban society is very poor. Prawer's model is based on the earlier one of the Muslim city, but the scholars who followed him did not succeed in establishing a clear understanding of the Frankish city or a clearer distinction between the Frankish city and the Frankish castle. Is it at all possible to do so?

*Crusader castle and Crusader city: is it possible
to differentiate between the two?*

Adherents of the segregation model based their assertion – that the Franks preferred living in cities to residing in villages – on a ‘sense of fear’ which prevailed among the relatively few Crusaders in Palestine and which more than anything else affected Frankish life in the country. ‘Crusader’ cities and the Frankish castles are both portrayed by these scholars as a means of defending life and property, while they consider the villages to have been insecure and the lives of their residents constantly endangered.

‘The character of Frankish settlement stemmed primarily from one cause, their small numbers’, wrote Claude Cahen in his first published work, which dealt with the area of Antioch. He continued:

The attempt to live in the heart of a neutral or hostile population placed the Franks in a lethally dangerous position. They therefore congregated in a small number of locations, with the majority of them living in a few cities, particularly Antioch . . . The nobles, together with their subjects, settled down in a few fortresses which they built or captured in order to defend an area or a key position.¹

We shall deal in Chapter 10 devoted to ‘The geography of fear’ with the assertion that the Levant was subject to ‘a precarious security situation’ during the twelfth century. However, already at this stage it should be noted that one of the difficulties in accepting the claim that the Franks tended to shut themselves off behind the walls of cities and castles lies in the absence of a clear definition of the Crusader ‘city’ and ‘castle’, as well as the lack of differentiation between these two and the Crusader ‘village’. These three emblematic concepts – city, castle, and village – became symbolic of the nature of the Frankish settlement, although none ever earned an exact definition.

¹ Cahen, 1940, 327 (my translation, R. E.); Prawer, 1980b, 102–42; Richard, 1980, 655; Cahen, 1950–51, 286: ‘Les Francs se sont cantonnées dans les villes et les châteaux-forts; au travail de la terre ils n’ont pas participé.’

In some cases, a definition is superfluous. There is no doubt, for example, even on an intuitive level, that places like Acre, Antioch, and Jerusalem were fortified cities in the twelfth century. There is also no doubt that sites such as Crac des Chevaliers, Margat, or Belvoir should be described as castles. This intuitive identification is correct, particularly in the case of the big Crusader castles. Over time, Belvoir or Crac des Chevaliers were transformed into visual representations and icons symbolising the structure of all Crusader castles, and their names are always mentioned in any discussion of the larger ones. The smaller structures, which account for the vast majority of Frankish castles, are still awaiting a precise definition, and it is doubtful whether one can rely on the external appearance of the larger castles in order to identify the smaller ones. A meticulous check will show that even the emblematic silhouette of the larger Crusader castles is misleading, for much of what is identified as being 'a big Crusader castle' is in fact external fortifications added by none other than the Muslim rulers after they took the castles from the Franks. This is true of the external walls of Crac des Chevaliers and of Shaubak; the walls of Shaubak, which looks like 'a typical Crusader castle', do not contain even one section predating the Mamluk period.

Even the widely accepted theory as to the development of the early Crusader castles, discussed earlier (in Chapter 5), is not helpful. That theory describes the typical smaller castles as being rectangular or almost rectangular structures with towers at the corners;² but even this conventional outlook, which claims that all Crusader castles followed a typical structural form, does not differentiate between small fortresses and manor houses of similar size and shape (see illustrations 11.1 and 11.2: Comparative chart of the Frankish castles drawn on the same scale, pp. 183–84). Thus, for example, it is difficult to decide whether one should term the Frankish castles at Bayt 'Itab or Bir Zayt 'small castles', 'large manor houses', or 'hall houses'. Even an attempt to distinguish between a village containing a fortified structure and a small castle often presents many difficulties.³

In many castles (such as Ibelin, Mi'iliya, Gaza, and elsewhere), the 'fort' formed only part of the settlement complex, which included a non-fortified rural neighbourhood (*burgus*) adjacent to its walls. In these cases, is there any point in treating the castle and the *burgus* as two separate geographic entities, terming one a castle and the other a village? Would

² Pringle, 1997a, 10.

³ Pringle, 2000, 204–13, tries to follow the development between a courtyard building and a castle.

the fort have been viable without the village that bordered on it? What gives rise to our natural inclination to call these complexes, which include both a village and a fort, 'castles', and not 'villages'? In any case, it seems that 'castle' is a more fitting classification for complexes which included both a castle and an adjacent village than for sites having a fortified structure alone, because there were always neighbourhoods next to the large castles, whereas manor houses and hall houses were generally isolated structures, without any agricultural area outside their walls. An inverse difficulty arises when we deal with villages containing an element of fortification. How large must the 'tower' in the centre of the village be in order for it to be termed a 'castle'?

The longer the settlement existed, the more complex are the issues related to defining its character. What, for example, is the status of small neighbourhoods which were first established just outside the castle walls but as time passed developed into small cities? Should we differentiate between them and similar neighbourhoods which did not grow, remaining small rural communities at different levels of development? Would it be correct to term the former 'small cities' and the latter simply 'fortified villages'? Were some of the cities, at the beginning of their process of development, villages or 'evolving cities'? And when should one cease referring to a site as a village and begin to call it a city? Was Birra a fortified village, a castle, or a 'very small city'? Even the use of place-names is misleading: could the fact that words like *castellum*, *castra*, *praesidium*, or *turris* appear in a certain place-name testify to the existence of fortresses and exclude the possibility of the place being a village? In many sources one can find the words *castellum* and *castrum* in the sense of bigger villages or in the meaning – common in many locations during the Middle Ages – of a fortified agricultural settlement. For example, could the name Castellum Emaus not have been derived from the biblical source,⁴ or does it refer to a fortified rural settlement or a real fortress?

The inventory of Crusader 'castles' does not enable us to differentiate between Crusader cities and castles. Is it really possible to separate the economic and geographic functions of the *burgi* which sprang up outside the walls of the castles from those of what we call 'cities'? If this is possible, at what stage could we cease terming the *burgi* established adjacent to the walls of 'Athlit and Safed 'castles' and begin calling them 'cities'? Is

⁴ Luke, 24: 13.

Crusader Arsuf really a city, or only a castle? And what about Caesarea? Suffice it to say that the majority of scholars of Crusader castles turn a blind eye to all these difficulties, preferring to treat Crusader 'cities' also as 'castles' without making any effort to differentiate between the two categories. Even Prawer, who maintained that all Crusader cities were in effect Byzantine or Muslim ones which were settled anew, included all of them in the list of Crusader castles. On the other hand, he saw no difficulty in including 'Athlit, which was definitely established during the Crusader period, among the cities.

Furthermore, the differentiation scholars have made between cities and villages, or between these two and castles, is unclear and certainly not self-evident. Certain researchers have included villages among the cities. Denys Pringle, for example, basing his argument on a list of Jean of Ibelin (Jaffa), maintains in a legalistic manner that any place which had a court of burgesses was a city.⁵ Such a definition has clear advantages – since it calls for no functional or archaeological support, it can be categorical. But Pringle's approach gives rise to serious difficulties, for it is based on two fundamental premises: that every settlement with a court of burgesses was really a city, and that Jean of Ibelin's list is exact and free of copyists' errors or intentional mistakes.⁶

Ignoring the archaeological evidence also raises serious problems, for among the settlements noted in the list of Jean of Ibelin were small and remote rural villages such as Bayt Surik, ar-Ram, or Kh. al-Burj. Though not all the small sites included in the list have been identified beyond any doubt, some of them are well known. The village of al-Qubayba (Parva Mahomeria), for instance, has been almost completely excavated, and modern research is well aware of the findings. This is a village comprising at most a few tens of houses, most of whose residents engaged in the production of oil and wine. It may be assumed with a high degree of certainty that the majority of the residents were freehold farmers with the status of burgesses, and that their number – probably several score – justified the existence of a court of burgesses. But is this enough to define al-Qubayba as a city?⁷ Medieval sources, in any event, referred to Parva

⁵ See Pringle, 1995; 1997a, 2–6. Other scholars who edited and interpreted Jean of Ibelin's texts did not identify the 'courts de borgesie' with specific cities, but with specific lordships. See Edbury, 1997, 155–62; Richard, 1954, 563–77.

⁶ Edbury, 1997, 115–18 (text); 194–95 (trans.); for anomalies contained in the texts see Edbury, 1997, 159–62; Richard, 1954.

⁷ Bagatti, 1947; Benvenisti, 1970, 224–27; Pringle, 1997a, 86–87; Ellenblum, 1998, 86–94.

Mahomeria as a villa, not as a city.⁸ Aware of the difficulty, Pringle tried to resolve the problem by describing these remote villages as 'towns in the making'.⁹ This is indeed an interesting criterion, one that adds potential future development to the geographic and legal definition of an existing settlement. However, it seems doubtful whether one can use it to decide whether al-Qubayba or very small settlements such as al-Burj were cities.

Michael Ehrlich also adopted a legalistic criterion to overcome the contradiction between geographic reality and the written sources.¹⁰ Following Pringle, he classified every site that was large enough to warrant a court of burgesses as a 'Crusader city', but added a reservation: that its urban status had been recognised by some authoritative body (whose identity is not defined). This does somewhat narrow down Pringle's sweeping definition, but even here there is no real discernment between Crusader 'city' and 'castle', while the differentiation between Crusader 'city' and 'village' remains blurred to a great degree. It would seem that for both Pringle and Ehrlich the very presence of a population of burgesses is evidence enough for the existence of a city, but this assumption lacks support from other sources: during the Middle Ages, burgesses holding civic rights resided in both small and large settlements. Robert Fossier, who encountered the same problem when dealing with French cities, points out that the difficulties do not stem from interpretation of the texts or from the lack of information:

The number of people, of which we have no knowledge for distant periods, cannot serve as a measure [to define a city], nor can their legal status . . . for the very same [legal] documents refer both to the village and the commune. Even the terminology used cannot come to our aid, since nobles and burgesses were everywhere. Any attempt to point to the existence of commercial activity or of money-changing establishments [as evidence of the existence of an urban entity] will be a far too narrow generalisation. In northern France, cows grazed within 'urban' areas, while in southern and central France individual isolated houses were built with more than one storey . . . Walls enclose a monastery and a neighbourhood adjacent to a castle just as they encircle a city. Economic specialisation and division of labour, characteristic of the cities in the fourteenth

⁸ See, for example, 'Betsurieh, in cuius territorio fundata est *villa* que dicitur Parva Mahomeria,' Holy Sepulchre, no. 135, 16 July 1164, 262–63; '*villas* etiam, quas edificastis, ut Magnam Mahomariam et Parvam et Bethsuri, et alias omnes, quas edificaturi estis . . .' (my emphasis – R.E).

⁹ Pringle, 1995, 71.

¹⁰ Ehrlich, 2000, 29, 252.

century, seem to be more of a consequence that gradually emerged as cities developed, rather than the reason for the existence of cities.¹¹

Fossier solves the difficulty by asserting that the medieval city was a marginal phenomenon of little importance. Other European scholars also found it difficult to differentiate between medieval cities, castles, and villages; all efforts to define them failed to lead to an accepted formula.¹²

Even the Weberian definition of the city, which focuses on the character of 'urban society' and not on an attempt to present the characteristics of the physical city itself, is of no help when dealing with cities of the Frankish period.¹³ Weber's urban society is defined in terms of a civil society: he concentrated on common perceptions and the manner in which local interests were dealt with. Modern studies have added to the sociological criteria listed by Weber by claiming that the organisation and shape of the physical space reflects social characteristics.¹⁴ But, even according to Weber, urban society is not created merely by lumping together a population in a settlement surrounded by walls and towers. The process by which a 'rural society' is transformed into an 'urban society' is a major sociological change which engulfs all human, cultural, economic, geographic, and psychological domains. The process of historical urbanisation creates new types of mentality and values, and its stages of development can only be determined retrospectively. We certainly cannot speak, therefore, of the existence of an 'urban society' in settlements about whose physical layout we have only scant information and about whose economy, society, corporate administration, and the perceptions of their residents we know almost nothing.

All the difficulties and contradictions I have pointed to did not arise by chance. They stem from the fact that village, tower, castle, and city are not different types of settlements but rather diverse components of the same whole, or part of that whole during different periods of time. Defining each one of these components separately is an attempt having no significance at all, except in the case of a very few extreme cases, whose character cannot be challenged. Any attempt to rely upon one dominant factor – fortifications, commerce, agriculture, or a population of

¹¹ Fossier, 1989, 982. For an attempt to define the meaning of a city in twelfth-century European society, see Lopez, 1966, 27–43.

¹² Reynolds, 1995, 1–2; Reynolds, 1997, 156–57.

¹³ See, for example, Nippel, 1991, 19–30; Ringer, 1994, 12–18; for Weber's theory and the Islamic city, see Lapidus, 1999, 139–51; Schluchter, 1999, 53–138.

¹⁴ Braunfels, 1988.

burgesses – in order to differentiate between castle, village, and city is doomed to failure, for each of these factors also existed in the other settlement types. Agriculture, for instance, was not an occupation practised only by villagers, just as crafts, commerce, and burgesses were not necessarily characteristic of cities alone. Since security was a universal necessity, diverse types of fortifications were to be found in almost all medieval settlements, as were certain elements of agricultural, administrative, or ecclesiastical activity.

Assigning such great importance to fortification, to such an extent that it could be used as a criterion for the classification of medieval settlements, has led to presenting almost the entire distribution of Crusader settlements as being composed of castles and towers of various sizes. A case in point is the gazetteer of secular buildings in the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem prepared by Pringle. Instead of trying to define a 'Crusader castle' or the extent of fortifications in a specific settlement, he drew up a list of Frankish settlements which contained elements of fortification. The list begins with the forty-eight 'cities' mentioned in the list of Jean of Ibelin. Forty of them (including such relatively small sites as Qal'at Tantura, Qaqun, or Mi'ilya and more) were designated '[sites] where a sufficient number of Franks were living', and the other eight are defined as "new towns" established during the Crusader period, which although small and agricultural in character were socially, economically and institutionally towns in the making'.¹⁵ The list also contains eighty-nine towers and fifteen hall houses.

Though Pringle's listing of towers and hall houses does include a few structures whose dating is erroneous or not ascertained,¹⁶ it is a good example of the problem indicated above: the difficult task of differentiating between cities, castles, and villages. Some of the towers in the list were erected in the centre of Crusader 'cities' such as Nablus, Beit Shean, Bethlehem, Caesarea, and even Jerusalem. Other towers are an integral part of the fortifications of large castles such as Beaufort, Latrun, Montfort, Qal'at Jidin, Yokne'am, and 'Athlit. Additional towers were built in Crusader villages. There are towers which could easily have been included in the list of cities and also in that of the castles, while others could not be classified as belonging to any one of the lists. Pringle's listing

¹⁵ Pringle, 1997a, 3–11.

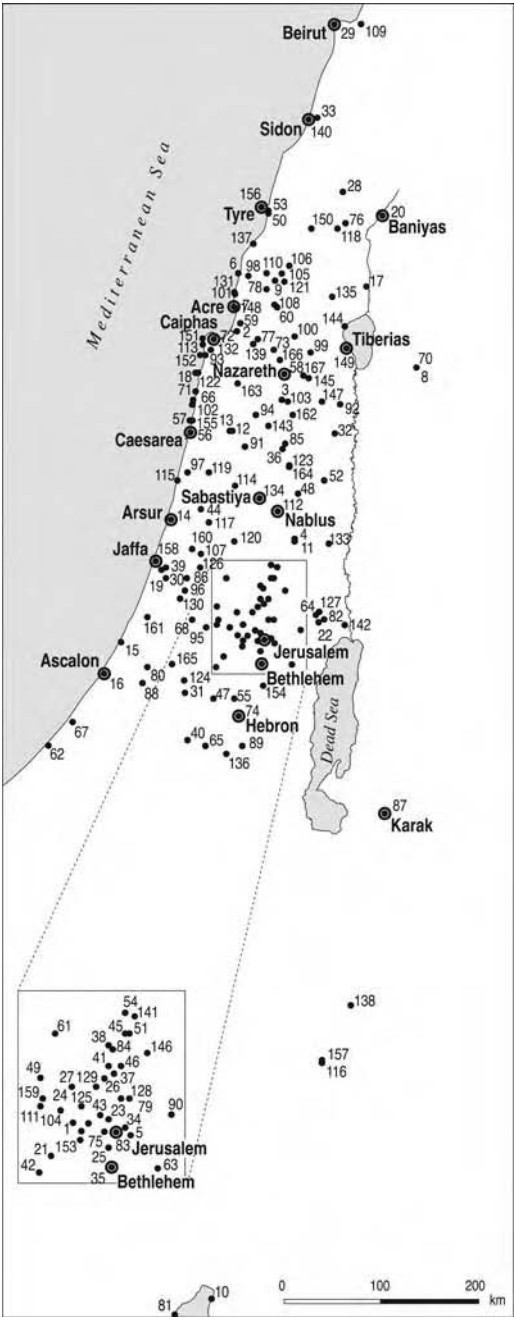
¹⁶ Frankish coins were excavated in the foundations of Jazirat Far'un, and a Frankish building still exists in 'Ayn 'Arik whereas in Kh. Qarhata, no. 171, Kh. Marus, no. 147 or Qal'at Rahib, no. 166 there are no indications for such a Frankish existence.

brings home, in the most convincing manner, what I have already maintained: towers and other forms of fortifications were found in all types of Crusader settlements and should not be relied upon as a criterion for differentiating between cities, castles, and villages. Scholars who did so based their arguments on the presence of fortified elements (easily identified), and treated the entire system of Crusader settlements as one spectrum of castles and towers of various sizes.

In Map 7.1 (which I drew on the basis of the appendix to this volume), I noted all sites which various scholars have identified as Crusader castles or towers. Some of them also appear in lists of cities, others have been classified as castles, and many others as towers. The appendix lists no less than 162 sites, in several of which there are no Crusader remains at all. Quite a few of the sites have been identified by all or most of the scholars as Crusader castles. It can be established that many of the sites which, until a decade ago, were (and many still are) dated to the Frankish period were identified by one scholar or another as a castle or a tower.

The reduction of most Frankish settlements into a series of castles, towers, and fortified cities bolsters the concept which considers military aspects as being more relevant than any other feature of Frankish life in the Levant. According to its adherents, the Franks could not live – even for short periods of time – in settlements that were not fortified, and the Frankish ‘castle’ or ‘tower’ became the most important characteristic of, and sometime even a synonym for, all their settlements, no matter what their size. All Frankish settlements were no more than castles or fortifications differing only in dimensions, the manner of their defence, and ownership – but in the final tally they were at best different types of fortifications. Even sites which, by applying a different system of classification, could have been called villages, became castles, towers, or even ‘towns in the making’. Thus did the theory that claimed that the Franks refrained from settling in rural areas gain wide acceptance, while its supporters disregarded the fascinating complexity that was characteristic of the different types of settlements in the Middle Ages.

It is therefore necessary to clearly delineate the polyvalent character of such settlements: a medieval city could also serve as a castle, and indeed most medieval cities, Muslim and Western alike, did have fortifications. New castles (such as Tripoli, for example) were often – and this holds true for the Levant as well as Europe – the seeds from which future cities sprang. Adjacent to the walls of the great majority of Crusader castles were residential neighbourhoods which one would be equally justified in describing as villages or as new cities, the difference between ‘village’



Map 7.1. Sites identified as crsusader castles, towers, or cities.

and 'city' becoming discernible only in retrospect, after the development of an urban society at the site. The same holds true for Europe: the suburbs which developed outside the walls of European castles were similar in character to those established next to the large monasteries, or adjacent to the ancient Roman cities. The various *burg*i differed one from the other in accordance with their founding regulations.

The reductive perception of Frankish settlement, which ignores the multi-faceted complexity of life in medieval settlements, also generally overlooks the basic criterion that differentiated between settlements in the pre-modern period: difference in size, and what this implies about the services which each settlement could provide for its population. The spectrum of Frankish settlements included larger ones and smaller ones, highly fortified sites and ones with lesser fortifications, settlements which supplied daily needs and services and those whose economic threshold was high enough to justify their existence only in bigger villages and centres.

I believe that a more productive manner of dealing with such a complex reality would be to examine the geographic and historical implications of the spatial distribution of Frankish settlements, which should be analysed on the basis of the size, composition of the population, and the services each centre could provide.

The map of the villages which existed within the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem throughout its entire existence includes about 700 place-names. Some were very small, others were somewhat larger, and a few were bigger settlements which could be labelled cities. Some existed throughout the entire period, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, others during only part of it. The settlements can be divided into three groups in accordance with their size, centrality, and the services they provided for the population in their environs. Every larger settlement provided administrative, commercial, and ecclesiastical services to nearby smaller ones.

The major centres are those which are usually labelled 'cities', not only by modern scholars but also by contemporaries. There were about sixteen such cities in the twelfth century, the most important among them being Beirut, Tyre, Sidon, Acre, Baniyas, Tiberias, Nazareth, Caesarea, Arsuf (Arsur), Jaffa, Jerusalem, Nablus, Sebaste, Karak, Bethlehem, St Abraham (Hebron), and Ascalon. Some of these cities were fortified and others were not; some were earlier and even ancient cities and others were newly founded. The list, however, is not much different from the list of 'cities enclosed by town walls' prepared by Pringle.¹⁷ In my opinion, however,

¹⁷ Pringle, 1997a, 5.

ecclesiastical centres, such as Nazareth, Sebaste, and Bethlehem, provided services of a higher scale than the medium-sized fortified *castra* of Sandalion and Haifa, and should therefore appear in any list of twelfth-century Crusader cities. Muslim sources do not hesitate to describe Nazareth as a city.¹⁸ The same probably holds true for fortified regional centres such as Karak, which provided military and ecclesiastical services of the highest order to its neighbourhood. The combined lists, however, contain nineteen cities.

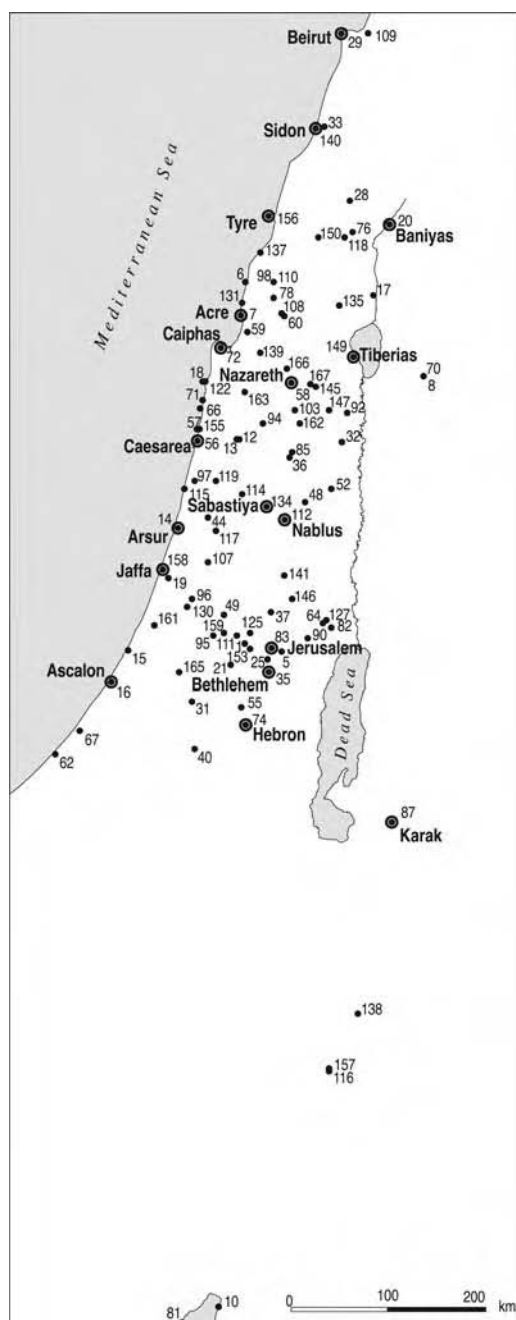
The second group was composed of regional administrative, commercial, or ecclesiastical centres. They are usually referred to as castles, although not all of them were fortified and not all of them provided the surrounding area with the best possible defence. However, the selection of the real regional centres from the plethora of sites that have been classified by earlier scholars as 'castles' or 'towers' is not very obvious. Nevertheless, the absence of any comprehensive definition of Crusader castles, or any clear distinction between 'castle', 'village', and 'city', is compensated for by the wide consensus which exists among the scholars and which embraces those sites that are recognised by many, or all, students of Crusader castles as composing the inventory of fortresses in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.

This consensus, although vague and ambiguous, is depicted in Map 7.2 and Table 7.1, which include two types of sites: (a) those identified as fortified cities or castles by all or the majority of the scholars who studied them; (b) those which were described as castles by contemporary Muslim¹⁹ and/or Latin authors. Various scholars, including Rey, Lawrence, Deschamps, Conder, Prawer, Benvenisti, Müller-Wiener, Boase, Smail, Eydoux, Pringle, and Kennedy, have compiled lists of castles. There are sites which appear in all the lists; others appear only in the very detailed lists and on historical-geographical maps.

The historical documents seem to be more precise. Muslim chroniclers mention fifty-seven castles, among which are five sites that do not appear as castles in any Latin source (such as Sebaste, Sinjil, Dayr al-Asad, Lajjun, and Manueth), and fifty-one which appear in both Latin and Arabic documents. Latin written sources mention seventy-seven *castella*, *castra*, *praesidia*, and *civitates*, some of which are not known archaeologically and are probably no more than big villages or fortified agricultural

¹⁸ Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 226.

¹⁹ Imād al-Dīn al-Isfahānī, 111; 35; Abu-Shama, vol. 1.1–2, 87, 1. 3–5.



Map 7.2. The consensual list of 'crusader castles'.

Table 7.1. *Consensual list of the Frankish centres of the Latin Kingdom including those usually referred to as 'cities'*

	Name	Conder	Prawer and Benvenisti	Deschamps	Pringle	Sources	J. of Ibelin
1	Abu-Gosh, Castellum Emaus <i>Terra Emaus</i>		<i>Small castle</i>	+		Latin	
2	‘Aizariya Bethania, <i>St Lazarus</i>	Small castle	Small castle	+	Tower	Lat & Ar	+
3	Akhziv, Az-Zib, Casale Imbert		Small castle	+	Tower	Lat & Ar	+
4	‘Akko, Acre	Fortified town	Fortified town	+	Town	Lat & Ar	
5	Al-‘Al	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Tower	Lat & Ar	
6	‘Aqaba <i>Aila</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+		Lat & Ar	
7	‘Ar’ara <i>Castrum planorum</i>			+		Latin	
8	‘Ara <i>Castellum arearum</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+		Latin	
9	Arshaf Tell, Arsuf, <i>Arsur</i>	Fortified town	Fortified town	+	<i>Castle</i>	Lat & Ar	+
10	Ashdod-Yam <i>Castellum Beroart</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+		Latin	
11	Ashqelon, <i>Ascalon</i>	Fortified town	Fortified town	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
12	‘Ateret, Vadum Iacob	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
13	‘Atil, <i>Castellum Peregrinorum</i>	<i>Castle</i>	<i>Castle</i>	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
14	Azor Yazur, <i>Castel des Plains</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Tower	Lat & Ar	+
15	Baniyas, <i>Belinas</i>	Fortified town	Fortified town	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
16	Beaufort	Castle	<i>Castle</i>	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
17	Beirut <i>Baruth</i>	Fortified town	Fortified town	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
18	Beit Guvrin <i>Bethgibelin</i>	<i>Castle</i>	Fortified town	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
19	Beit Shean, Beisan, <i>Bethsan</i>	Unfortified town, <i>small castle</i>	Fortified town or <i>small castle</i>	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
20	Belhacem		??	+		Latin	
21	Bethlehem	Unfortified town		+	Tower		+
22	Bil’ama <i>Castellum Beleisum</i> Chastiau St Job	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Castle	Latin	

23	Al-Bira <i>Magna Mahomeria</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>		Steward's curia	Lat & Ar.	+
24	Al-Burj <i>Castrum ficuum</i>	<i>Small castle</i>		+	Tower with wall	Latin	
25	Al-Burj Burj al-Habis, Qal'at al-Tantura, <i>Gith</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+ tower	Tower	Latin	
26	Al-Burj al-Ahmar, <i>Le Tour rouge</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Castle	Latin	
27	Burj al-Far'ah,				Castle		
28	Burj al-Malih,	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>		Castle		
29	Caesaria <i>Cesaire</i>	Fortified town	Fort. Town	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
30	<i>Castrum Feniculi</i>		<i>Small castle</i>		Tower	Latin	+
31	Dabburiya <i>Burja</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>		Tower	Latin	
32	Da'uq <i>Casale Doc, Castiel Doc</i>		<i>Small castle</i>		Castle	Arabic	
33	Dayr al-Asad <i>St George de Lebaene</i>				Castle	Lat & Ar	+
34	Dayr al-Balah <i>Daron</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
35	Dor Tantura, <i>Merle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
36	Gaza <i>Gadres</i>	Fortified town	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Tower	Lat & Ar	
37	Habis Jaldak	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	
38	Habonim, Kafr-Lam, <i>Cafarlet</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
39	Haifa, <i>Caiphas</i>	Fortified town	Fortified town	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
40	Hebron, <i>St Abraham</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	Unfortified	+	Tower	Lat & Ar	
41	Hunin <i>Chastel Neuf</i>	<i>Castle</i>	Township		Castle	Latin	+
42	Ieh'am Jidin, <i>Iudyn</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Castle	Latin	
43	Jazirat Fara'un <i>Isle de Graye</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	?	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	
44	Jericho	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Tower	Latin	+
45	Jerusalem	Fortified town	Fortified town	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
46	Jinin <i>Le Grand Gerin</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Tower?	Latin	
47	Karak, <i>Crac</i>	<i>Castle</i>	Fortified town, castle	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+

Table 7.1. (*cont.*)

	Name	Conder	Prawer and Benvenisti	Deschamps	Pringle	Sources	J. of Ibelin
48	Khan Khatrura Maldoim, Maldouin, <i>Castrum Dumi, la Tour Rouge</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Castle	Latin	
49	Kokav Hayarden Belvoir, <i>Coquet</i>	<i>Castle</i>	<i>Castle</i>	+	Castle	Lat & Ar Arabic	
50	Lajjun <i>Legio</i>	<i>Small castle</i>					
51	Latrun <i>Le Toron des Chevaliers</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
52	Lod <i>St George de Lidde</i>	Unfortified	Unfortified	+			
		Township	township				
53	Ma'abarot Madd ad-Dayr, <i>Montdidier</i>				Castle	Latin	
54	H. Manot alManawat, <i>Manueth</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>		Tower	Arabic	
55	Merhaviya, <i>La Feve</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	
56	H. Migdal Afeq, Majdal Yaba, <i>Mirabel</i>	<i>Castle</i>	<i>Castle</i>	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
57	Mi'iliya, <i>Castellum Regis</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	++	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
58	Mons Glavianus			+		Latin	
59	Montfort	<i>Castle</i>	<i>Castle</i>	+	Castle	Lat & Ar.	
60	An-Nabi-Samwil, <i>Mons Gaudii</i>						
61	Nablus, <i>Naples</i>	Unfortified town	Unfortified township	+	Castle	Latin	+
			<i>Small castle</i>				
62	Nairaba Munitio Malve?		<i>Small castle</i>				
63	Nazareth		<i>Small castle</i>			Latin	
64	Netaniya Umm Khalid, <i>Castellum Rogerii</i>		<i>Small city</i>		Tower Hall	Lat & Ar	
			<i>Small castle</i>		house	Latin	
65	Petra [al-Habis]			+	Castle	Arabic	
66	Qal'at ad Dubba	<i>Small castle</i>			Castle		

67	Qalansua	<i>Small castle</i>				
68	Qaqun <i>Caco</i>			+	Castle	Latin Lat & Ar
69	Qubayba, Parva Mahomeria					+
70	Qarta H., <i>Casale Desreiz</i>	<i>Small castle</i>		+	Tower	Latin
71	Quruntal, Templar Castle	<i>Small castle</i>		+		Latin
72	Ramla, <i>Rames</i>	Fortified town		+	Castle	Lat & Ar
73	Regba As-Saumariya, <i>Somelariya</i>					+
74	Sabastiya <i>Sebaste</i>	Unfortified town			Unfortified Township	Latin Arabic
75	Safad <i>Saphet</i>	<i>Castle</i>		+		+
76	<i>Scandalion</i> Iskandaruna	<i>Small castle</i>		+	Castle	Lat & Ar
77	Shaubak <i>Montreal</i>	<i>Castle</i>		+	Castle	Lat & Ar
78	Shefar'am Shafa-Amru, <i>Le Saffran</i>	<i>Small castle</i>			Castle	Lat & Ar
79	Sidon <i>Saieta</i>			+	Castle	Lat & Ar
80	Sinijl <i>St. Egidius</i>			+	Tower	Arabic
81	Mt. Tabor	<i>Small castle</i>	??		Castle	Lat & Ar
82	At-Taiyba <i>Effraon, Castrum Sancti elie</i>	<i>Small castle</i>		+	Castle	Lat & Ar
83	At-Taiyba <i>Forbelet</i>	<i>Small castle</i>			Castle	Arabic
84	Tiberias	Fortified town	??	+	Castle	Lat & Ar
85	Tibnin	<i>Castle</i>		+	Castle	Lat & Ar.
86	Tsova, Suba, <i>Belmont</i>	<i>Small castle</i>		+	Castle	Lat & Ar
87	Turris Salinarum	<i>Small castle</i>		+	Castle	Latin
88	Tyre, <i>Tyr</i>	Fortified town		+	Castle	Lat & Ar
89	Uaiyra <i>Li Vaux Moise</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	??	+	Castle	Latin
90	Yaffo Jaffa, <i>Japhé</i>	Fortified town		+	Castle	Lat & Ar
91	Yalu, <i>Chastel Hernaut</i>			+	Castle	Lat & Ar
92	Yavne <i>Ibelin</i>	<i>Small castle</i>		+	Castle	Lat & Ar
93	Tell Yizre'el Zir'in, <i>Petit Gerin, Zarin</i>			+		Arabic

Table 7.1. (*cont.*)

	Name	Conder	Prawer and Benvenisti	Deschamps	Pringle	Sources:	J. of Ibelin
94	Tell Yoqné'am <i>Caymont</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	+
95	Tell Zafit As-Safi, <i>Blanchegarde</i>	<i>Castle</i>	<i>Small castle</i>	+	Castle	Lat & Ar	
96	Zippori <i>Le Safforie</i>	Unfortified township	<i>Small castle</i> Unfortified township		Tower	Lat & Ar	

settlements. The list includes places such as Castellum Rogerii Longobardi, Castrum Feniculli, Castellum Emaus, and large monasteries such as those at Bethaniya (St Lazarus) and Mount Tabor. Seven additional sites do not appear in the texts as 'castles' but they were either fortified (Mons Gaudii, Burj al-Far'ah, Burj al-Malih, Cafarlet), or were recognized as ecclesiastical centres (Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Lydda) and therefore are included in the list. The total number of cities and castles which are included both in the archaeological lists and the historical sources is ninety-seven. If we deduct the number of bigger centres (sixteen or nineteen cities), then the number of castles included in the second group is reduced to eighty-one, or even seventy-eight.

The ratio of the number of settlements of the higher order ('cities') to those of the lower order (castles) is 1:5 (16:81). The anticipated ratio, on the basis of well-established geographic theory, is 1:6 and the number of primary and secondary centres is therefore bigger than the expected ratio in comparatively young spatial distributions. However, the presence of so many central places testifies to the maturity of the older spatial diffusion of primary centres and to the fact that this distribution represents a superimposition of the Frankish centres on the older local ones.

The secondary level includes castles and rural *burgi* such as Castellum Regis (Mi'ilya), Mirabel, Ibelin (Yavne), Belmont (Tsova), Betgibelin (Beit Guvrin), Beit Shean, Le Grand Gerin, and others. Many of these bigger centres, castles, and cities, were multi-functional entities which provided services to the surrounding neighbourhoods. The bigger the neighbourhood, the more complex and specialised were the services supplied by the centre; one of the most important in the Middle Ages was certainly the provision of a sense of security.

Sites at the secondary levels (eighty-one castles) sustained about 600 smaller villages, farmhouses, and hamlets; this is an average ratio of 1 'castle' to 7.3 'villages' or 'hamlets', whereas the anticipated ratio in a mature spatial distribution is 1:6. This spatial hierarchy can provide us with a better understanding of the spatial distribution of different sites in the medieval landscape. However, it may also provide us with a different framework for the study of Frankish castles.

The most important conclusion is that the defensibility of a certain site is not the only – or even the major – criterion for its function. Differences between one site and another lie more in the sphere of the services they provide rather than in their military structure. That explains why places such as Casale Sancti Egidii and Sebaste, or St George de la Baena and Manueth, which were definitely regional centres but certainly not castles

in the common use of that term, were labelled 'castles' by Muslim or Latin chroniclers.

The lower stratum in this hierarchy also presents us with diverse levels and shapes of settlements. Among them one can find sites which could be called villages, manor houses, farmhouses, and tiny fortresses, serving in their turn as nuclei for even smaller agricultural settlements, monasteries, and churches.

Can we rule out the possibility of castles having been erected for security reasons alone? Although we cannot define the functions of a certain site in unequivocal terms, it would not be inappropriate to assume that at least some of the castles in the Frankish Levant were constructed mainly for strategic reasons. There is no doubt that the Franks – at least during part of the twelfth century and in some sections of their kingdom – faced a real danger, and that the construction of castles was one measure to ensure their physical survival.

But is it possible to ascertain how and to what extent the castles furthered security? Were they erected in order to defend the kingdom's borders, or the environs of the castles themselves? What importance has modern scholarship attached to borders in the Middle Ages, and just how important did the Franks themselves consider them to be? Were there areas more prone to enemy attack than others? These will be the topics discussed in the next chapters.

PART III

*Geography of fear and the spatial
distribution of Frankish castles*

Borders and their defence

THE COLONIALIST MODEL OF REY, PRUTZ, AND DESCHAMPS

Rey and Conder, like many of those who followed them, linked the concept of the border – drawn from the field of modern political geography – with the Frankish kingdom. They therefore assumed that the Latin entities also had definite borders that could be drawn on a map. The borders of these states, it was claimed, were not the result of military or political coincidence; on the contrary, they were based on natural contours that afforded them a political significance. Furthermore, to many of the scholars who studied the geography of the Latin Kingdom, it was self-evident that Crusader fortresses had been built first and foremost in order to defend these natural borders.¹ At the beginning of his study of the monuments of Crusader military architecture, Rey describes the natural frontiers (*frontières naturelles*) of the ‘Christian principalities in Syria’. He believed them to have stretched from the Taurus Mountains and the sea in the north through the principality of Edessa ‘which under Baldwin de Bourg became a French principality’; this in order to check the advance of the princes of Mosul and Baghdad ‘[who] hurried to the help of the princes of Syria’. In Rey’s opinion, the eastern natural frontier of the ‘Christian strongholds’ was ‘the chain of Lebanese mountains that towered between the Christians and the sultanate of Damascus’.²

According to Rey, the Crusader fortresses of the kingdom of Jerusalem formed two types of strategic defence networks. The disparity between the two stemmed from differences in deterministic-geographical conditions,

¹ See Rey, 1871, 4; Prutz, 1883, 195–96; Lawrence, 1988, 120; Deschamps, 1934, 16–42; Grousset, 1934–36, iii, 1936, xxi; Smail, 1951, 138; Smail, 1956, 207; Prawer, 1956, 238 (in Hebrew); 1972, 44–45; Prawer and Benvenisti, 1970; Fedden and Thomson, 1957, 34–35; Benvenisti, 1965, 13; and 1970, 11–15; Müller-Wiener, 1966, 13. For a slightly different approach, see Barber, 1998, 9–22. For an earlier version of some of ideas presented here, see Ellenblum, 2002.

² Rey, 1871, 2–3.

and from the different nature of the challenges they faced. In any case, the prime objective of the castles was to contribute to the security of the kingdom. Chains of strongholds, which created clearly defined and delineated borders separating the Franks from their enemies, were built along the eastern, southern (the outskirts of the desert), and the western (seashore) borders. This linear defence network was composed of large fortresses that controlled strategic points and secondary strongholds that served as connecting links between the bigger ones. In Rey's view, even the port cities along the Mediterranean coast formed such a chain of fortresses,³ while the kingdom's southern desert frontier was defended by another that ran through Rosh Zohar, Samo'a, Bet Gibelin, and Dayr al-Balah.⁴

As for the Galilee, the Crusaders were content with building fortresses that controlled the major roads leading from Damascus to the interior of the kingdom. The difference between Galilee and other areas of Palestine, according to Rey, lay in the fact that '[in Galilee] there are many valleys that could enable the passage of an invading army from eastern Syria. The line of fortresses, [therefore], was built at the major points through which an invasion of the country was possible.' No fortresses were built in areas having geographic and demographic conditions that almost completely ruled out any danger of external invasion, like that part of Galilee which today forms part of Lebanon, where the mountains 'formed a natural boundary that made conquest almost impossible, and because their population was Christian'.

Rey's analysis, which depended exclusively on security and border-defence incentives, did not provide any explanation for the existence of fortresses in the interior of the country (such as those at Latrun, Belmont, Mirabel, Qaqun, and Yoqne'am) or those that were not situated on major thoroughfares (such as Mi'iliya or Qal'at Jiddin), even though he did describe a few of them, like those at Ibelin or Blanchegarde as being located 'behind the first line of fortifications'.

Such a view of political reality is based on the assumption that the Franks had a general conception of the state over which they ruled. Moreover, it assumes that even before their arrival in the Orient they

³ It is interesting to note, that even as late as 1963, great scholars like Bwron and Colvin explained the fortifications along the Channel in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries as serving 'as a defence against invasion, as a protection of essential communications, and as basis for continental expeditions'. Colvin, 1, 1963, 66.

⁴ Rey, 1871, 6.

had forged a fully developed outlook on the political entity they intended to establish. As one example, Rey points to a document dated 1100 in the Hospitaller archives which describes the landed property of the monastery at Mt Tabor and lists both the villages that were already in their possession and those which were 'as yet' in the hands of the infidels. For Rey, the 'Christians' obviously had drawn *a priori* borders for their future settlement.⁵

Hans Prutz, who in the summer of 1874 participated in the archaeological excavations initiated by Johannes Sepp at Tyre, also developed a theory that drew a connection between the Crusader fortresses and border defence, but his model supplies an explanation for the existence of fortresses in the interior of the country. He analyses the Crusader fortifications as consisting of three lines of defence: the first, an external line which protected the state's outer borders and two internal lines of larger fortresses supporting the outer border.⁶ Prutz, in effect, agreed with the assumption that the Crusader fortresses were positioned to form a defence network which testifies to the existence of strategic planning and to the concept that the Latin Kingdom was a state with clearly defined linear boundaries. According to his model, however, the heart of the Crusader state was limited to the coastal area only, while the area of defence was immeasurably wider. Prutz, like Rey before him, believed that clear and well-defined borderlines separated the area of Frankish rule from the sphere of Muslim rule and that a network of fortresses was designed to protect these lines.

In the 1930s Paul Deschamps, the leading expert on Frankish military architecture, developed a more complex geographic theory concerning the Crusader fortresses.⁷ Though he accepted the principles which formed the basis for the view adopted by Rey and Prutz – that the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem, like any modern state, had linear, defined borders – he placed greater emphasis on defence of the road networks, and not of the borders alone. The Crusader kingdom, he believed, was a long and narrow geographic entity whose main populated area was in the west, along the coast, and its natural boundaries were the Jordan Valley in the east and the Mediterranean in the west. More than forming a clear line of demarcation, the fortresses were intended to block the natural passageways from the Jordan Valley to the interior of the country and to turn the central mountains into an impassable obstacle for the kingdom's enemies.

⁵ Rey, 1866, 18–19.

⁶ Prutz, 1883, 195–96.

⁷ Deschamps, 1934, 16–42.

In his detailed examinations of all the fortresses of which he was aware, he paid attention to the way those castles were capable of controlling the neighbouring roads, mountain passes, and 'corridors that provided easy passage for the enemy attacking from east to west'.

These parameters were decisive, he claimed, in choosing the locations of fortresses, though even he admitted that not all of them had strategic attributes. Some were established to serve as guard posts on the pilgrimage routes, while small fortresses and single towers were meant to protect secondary roads running through the interior of the country. Thus, for example, the tower at Bayt Safafa was built 'to protect the road to Bethlehem', the tower at Carmel 'to guard the road leading to Edom', the network of towers in Samaria 'to defend the roads leading to Sebaste and Jenin', while the fortresses in western Samaria and the Sharon Plain (Kula, Dayr Abu Mash'al, Mirabel, Kalansue, Burj al-Ahmar, Qaqun, and Castellum Arearum) were all established in order 'to protect the interior highway that runs along the foot of the mountains'.

All the bigger fortresses, however, were established for strategic purposes; some of them also had secondary duties in the protection of international roads. According to Deschamps, even the bigger, strategic castles, situated to the east of the Jordan River, served to guard the roads and entrances leading into the heart of Palestine: 'In this important seigniorship of Trans-Jordan a *line* of fortresses towered upon the mountain-tops like a line of ancient watchmen who *defended the entrance to Judaea*.'⁸ Deschamps believed that the strategic role of these fortresses was to act as a barrier between the centres of Frankish population and Muslim enemy forces, but that they also simultaneously served as forward positions defending entrance points to Judaea and as posts where taxes and customs were collected from the many Muslim pilgrims who travelled the convoy routes.⁹

As for southern Judaea, here Deschamps agreed with Rey – the fortresses in this region did indeed create a line of defence for the kingdom against attacks from the southern desert. But in this case, too, he discerned

⁸ *Ibid.*, 30–31; 1939, I. (My emphasis.)

⁹ Thus, writing about the Eastern line of defence he claims: 'une ligne de défense, barrant la route à l'envahisseur et empêchant les communications entre les deux parties du monde musulman: l'Égypte et l'Arabie, d'une part, la Syrie, d'autre part. Car il ne pouvait être question pour une armée venant d'Arabie ou d'Égypte d'attaquer le royaume de Jérusalem directement par le sud.' See Deschamps, 1933, 43; Grousset was also of the opinion that the Frankish County of Edessa separated Mesopotamia and Aleppo on the one hand and Damascus on the other. See Grousset, 1934–36, III, xxi.

an additional role for the chain of fortresses stretching from Gaza to the south of the Dead Sea: this network was also intended to defend the east–west road that connected the ancient north–south axis along the coast (the *Via Maris*) to the major highway in Trans-Jordan.

One should probably seek the connection drawn by Deschamps between fortresses and roads in his monumental study of *Crac de Chevaliers* in Syria. After his first visit to the Levant in December 1928, he surveyed, excavated, and documented this fortress, which controls one of the important thoroughfares leading from Homs to the Mediterranean coast.¹⁰ During his following visits to the Orient he excavated this castle while simultaneously carrying out an extensive study of other Crusader fortresses. We may assume that what he learned from the specific location of *Crac de Chevaliers* influenced his outlook concerning the choice of location for all the Frankish fortresses in the East. Deschamps diverged from the opinions of his predecessors not only in that he assigned greater importance to road networks; in his view, the fortresses were an integral part of the economic activity of the state and an important element in the rule and administration of the country and its network of pilgrimage routes. Such an analysis provides a better explanation for the existence of large fortresses in the interior of the country; it can also be seen as a conscious extension of the French colonialist model: the Frankish colonialist regime developed the country's transportation networks to its own advantage and for the benefit of its subjects.

Deschamps was not the first to stress the importance of roads in shaping the network of Crusader fortresses. He was preceded by Rey, who claimed that the primary objective of fortresses in Galilee was to block roads to the interior and by Lawrence who, as early as 1911 in a letter to his friend Leonard Green, pointed to the role of roads and passes in shaping the geography of the Crusader states.¹¹

The French pro-colonialist viewpoint considered the Levant during the Crusades to be a dichotomous world divided into two types of territory: that outside the area of Frankish control – a dark and hostile Muslim world; and the Franco-Syrian sphere – a tolerant, non-racist entity where enlightened colonialism held sway. This enlightened world was beneficial to the Franks, but also to their subjects of all other religious persuasions.

¹⁰ Deschamps, 1934, 30–31.

¹¹ Lawrence, 1988, 134–36.

The geographic border that separated the two was sharp and clear from the cultural and symbolic points of view, and it was well defined and well defended by fortresses, the icons of power and might. According to adherents to the colonialist model, Crusader military forces were arrayed solely against external threats, the only real danger to the state. The residents of the interior of the country, who enjoyed the benefits of an enlightened colonialist regime, posed no threat to the rulers. The assumption that it was unnecessary to build fortresses in certain areas of the country such as Lebanese Galilee, populated by Oriental Christians, is highly compatible with the French colonialist outlook.

THE ANTI-COLONIALIST VIEW OF SMAIL AND PRAWER'S ZIONIST OUTLOOK

The concept of borders, so characteristic of modern states, was also seen as a self-evident characteristic of the Latin Kingdom by the protagonists of the anti-colonialist approach. The two approaches agreed on the very existence of the borders, and the controversy centred on their defence, or more specifically on the defensive tasks of the fortresses.

Smail, who utterly discarded the tendency to interpret Crusader fortresses as forming a unified defence system, was also the first to dispute the military tasks traditionally attributed to them. In addition, he was also the first to reject the concept of border defence propounded by Prutz, and the first to doubt the role of the fortresses in the protection of roads, as advocated by Deschamps.

Many castles, he claimed, were constructed before the arrival of the Crusades, while others were in use by the Franks for only short periods of time. Seeing them all as part of one defence system artificially brought together concepts of security and government held by various rulers during different periods of time. Furthermore, even the fortresses built by the Franks do not necessarily reflect their all being part of one system, for many of them were erected upon the personal initiative or whim of specific lords. Smail saw no way of connecting such sporadic initiatives with the need of the state to protect itself against the Muslim foe, preferring to explain them as the outcome of the personal needs of the individual lords.¹²

¹² Smail, 1956, 205.

Smail was also highly critical of Deschamps' theory connecting the location of fortresses and the proximity of roads. Many of the most important thoroughfares, he said, were not protected by fortresses. In the northeastern 'frontier', for example, only a very few fortresses were built. Even the castle of Vadum Iacob, which, as its name testifies, was erected to protect the crucial fords across the Jordan River, was built only in 1179 and existed for less than a year. Another major crossing at as-Sinbara was not fortified at all and the eastern slopes of the mountains of Samaria, facing towards the area which purportedly posed the greatest danger of invasion, were completely exposed.¹³

According to Smail, the fortresses played a very small role in defending the borders of the kingdom. Even the castles situated very near to the borders, he said, had only very limited military importance in wartime. Fortresses could not seal off borders and they could not even prevent the advent of the enemy into the core of the country. Only in the modern period did artillery, which is crucial to block advance routes, become part of land battles. Furthermore, if the land forces are in no need of continuous supplies and constant communication with the rear lines, closing off roads is of no significance. Given the logistics and the quality of artillery in the twelfth century, Smail concludes that an invasion of the country could not be prevented.¹⁴

Routes and areas were held or commanded by medieval garrisons only in the sense that those garrisons dominated them in time of peace and could repress civil disturbance or minor enemy raids. But when warfare was fought on a scale likely to endanger the Latin occupation, no fortress or group of fortresses could restrain the passage of an invading force.¹⁵

That, says Smail, explains why garrisons stationed in the border fortresses tended to leave their posts during periods of general mobilisation in order to join forces with the king's army, which assembled at a location far from the border.¹⁶

The Franks used border fortresses as bases for battles or as a refuge in case they were routed, but these roles should not be seen as their *raison*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 204–08.

¹⁴ Smail, 1951, 138; 1956, 207.

¹⁵ Smail, 1956, 205; Smail refers to Wilkinson, 1927, 19–21 and 69–72. He presents the examples of the frequent invasion of the County of Edessa, which was supposed to block the Muslims from invading the coast, and the five occasions on which Shirkuh and Salah al-Din crossed the Jordan despite the Frankish castles. See Smail, 1951, 137, note 22.

¹⁶ The desertion of Tiberias, and the gathering of its garrison in Saffuriya, preceded the battle of Hattin in 1187 and the loss of Atharib in 1119.

d'être. The fact that border fortresses did fill a special function during times of crisis is not enough to assume that such functions were the major characteristic of all fortresses at all times.¹⁷ If fortresses as a whole do have a set of primary functions, these should be sought in the day-to-day administration of the kingdom: as enabling the control and exploitation of the population that resided in the vicinity of the fortress; as economic administrative centres serving the needs of the direct overlord of the fortress; as part of the system for collecting taxes from local residents and the levies imposed on convoys using the roads; as bases for forces which policed the area and prevented highway robbery; and as a means for controlling nomadic tribes. In the final tally, the fortresses brought economic prosperity to some of the regions in which they were built, and encouraged settlement in previously unpopulated areas.¹⁸

The site and location of each individual fortress were the result of geographic influences and had geographic significance; these stemmed from its specific function. But Smail separated the question of the specific function of each fortress from the issue of what significance should be attached to the spreading out of fortresses as one network. Strategic defence, he claimed, was only one of those functions, and generally not the most important. Only a small number of Crusader fortresses filled real strategic functions, and these roles were connected to the manner in which the Franks conducted their sieges. When mounting a siege, it was their custom to erect temporary towers to protect themselves against surprise attacks by their besieged enemies from within the city. Smail believes that this siege tactic influenced the construction of some of the Frankish fortresses in Syria. Thus, for example, the Franks built the fortress of Toron (Tibnin) as a defence against Tyre, when they were besieging that city. Toron could later aid the Franks in defending themselves against the local population who collaborated with the enemy.¹⁹

In sum, the primary objective of the Crusader fortresses, says Smail, was to serve the economic and colonialist requirements of the Franks themselves, and any attempt to connect the particular whims of the individual Frankish landlords and portray them as a well-planned defensive network that was also intended to meet the needs of the local population is only an anachronistic (and I might add, a pro-colonialist) interpretation of what was, in effect, a very different state of affairs.

¹⁷ Smail, 1951, 136.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 144, notes 59–60.

¹⁹ Smail, 1951, 141–43.

Smail's conclusions influenced an entire generation of scholars; their traces can be found in the works of Denys Pringle and Christopher Marshall, and to a lesser degree in the early writings of Joshua Prawer. However, surprisingly enough we see that the major premises of Smail's convincing analysis were soon rejected by scholars who followed him, such as Prawer himself.

Prawer too depicted the fortresses built around Ascalon (Betgibelin, Blanchgarde, Ibelin, and Gaza) as a defence network of the type to which Smail had referred when writing about Toron:

During the reign of Fulk of Anjou [1132–41] the power of the Crusader State was on a permanent incline . . . The whole of the southern coast line was in ruins because *the Crusaders* [my emphasis] would invade and destroy the fields. But the Egyptian city maintained its artificial existence thanks to the continuous assistance of the Egyptian rulers . . . [And then] the Crusaders designed a new plan for solving the problem of Ascalon. For four years they surrounded Ascalon with a web of fortresses built along the major routes of invasion and infiltration, while simultaneously developing a defensive strategy which to some degree was revolutionary and novel in regard to border defence: the creation of a Crusader rural population which, the deeper its roots were implanted, the more it strengthened the military power.²⁰

It would seem that only Smail's theory about the adoption of a defensive strategy in the midst of an offensive campaign, published a year before Prawer's article, can explain the seeming contradiction between the beginning, which speaks of a Crusader offensive approach towards Ascalon, and the end of the passage quoted above, which refers to a defensive approach.

But Prawer's views on the security issues of the Latin kingdom were based to no small degree on his own political views, which were not fully in accordance with Smail's methodology. Evidence of the extent to which the political situation of the 1950s and 1960s influenced Prawer is provided by the title he chose for one of his articles: 'Ascalon and the Ascalon Strip in Crusader Politics', reminiscent of the modern 'Gaza Strip', created as a result of the 1948 war in Palestine.²¹ In his writings he repeatedly stressed the strategic and tactical importance of the Crusader fortresses and their chronic lack of manpower:

²⁰ Prawer, 1956, 238 (my translation).

²¹ The Gaza Strip was, and still is, a Palestinian enclave, ruled during the 1950s by the Egyptians, and conceived by the Israelis as a real threat to their very existence. Israel created a network of settlements populated by soldier-farmers to block the incursions of Palestinians from the Strip into Israel.

Military security was the guiding motive of Frankish life overseas. A minority at the time of conquest, the crusaders remained a minority during the two hundred years of their existence. Thus the Latin Kingdom was bound to concentrate its greatest efforts on security. One aspect of this all-pervading imperative was the pattern of Frankish settlement. As minorities always do, the Franks tended to concentrate in a few places. *This shortened their lines of defence* [my emphasis – R.E.] and enabled a massive display of their military potential. Thus the overwhelming majority of the Frankish population lived in strongly fortified cities and castles. Even in the countryside their villages were fortified . . . The crusaders used existing facilities, but in response to their own needs they embarked on a tremendous task of making their kingdom impregnable. In a country where shortage of manpower was a constant feature of existence, stone walls had to replace warriors in the permanent and arduous task of defence.²²

Prawer adopted only those elements of Smail's theory which did not contradict his own demographic- and security-oriented interpretation. He agreed that the fortresses had not been erected in accordance with an overall plan but had developed gradually as a reaction to direct challenges; he agreed that the spatial distribution of the castles reflects the expansion of the Crusaders' conquests and their ability to rule; and he concurred with Smail's surprise at the small number of Frankish castles in the north of the country.

However, Prawer did believe that the lack of settlers in the East, emanating from the paucity of migrants, forced the Franks to concentrate their forces in isolated fortresses instead of encouraging settlement and agriculture, and that due to reasons connected with their security they became an exploiting, non-productive minority in the land they had conquered. Prawer's analysis of the security of the Latin Kingdom is presented in modern, almost military-like phraseology that includes terms such as 'shortened lines of defence' or 'the Ascalon Strip'. These modern metaphors sound quite convincing to contemporary ears and cause the reader to ignore the establishment of Latin settlements along an indefensible axis that connected Edessa in the north, al-Jazirah in the north-east, Antioch on the Orontes on the west, and Jerusalem in the Holy Land in the south.

Therefore, Prawer created a new interpretation of the distribution of Crusader castles, borrowing major aspects from Rey, Prutz, and Deschamps even though they were completely rejected by Smail:

²² Prawer, 1972, 281.

A map of the crusader kingdom can convey the impression that the ten fortresses from Mount Hermon to 'Aqaba served as an outer line of defence . . . Behind the fortresses on the main thoroughfare of Transjordan – roughly corresponding to a line separating the desert from the cultivated lands – lie the Jordan River, the Dead Sea and the great southern desert, *La Grande Berrie*. This served as a second line of security.²³

Yet, in the same breath Praver agreed with Smail that '[These castles] were not the result of overall planning and their construction was caused by specific political circumstances. Furthermore, their military importance in an age of mobile cavalry should not be exaggerated.'

Such ambivalence came to the fore again a bit further on in his exposition. While concurring with Smail that the important passes between Damascus and the north of the kingdom were not fortified, at the same time he reiterated Deschamps' belief that

a line of powerful fortresses in excellent strategic locations stretched on the west bank of the Jordan along the edge of the Galilean mountains . . . The important crossing of Sinn al-Nabra, where the crusaders suffered a memorable defeat in 1113 against a coalition of Moslem forces, was overlooked by the Hospitaller castle of *Belvoir* (Kaukab al-Hawa) . . . and no other castle ever enjoyed a better strategic location.²⁴

Praver constructed an all-encompassing theory based on the views of all his predecessors, with but one condition: that its strategic defensive-demographic aspect be the central pinion upon which it rested. Roadways and the possibility of invasion were what determined the location of fortresses, and of monasteries as well, for these also took into account internal security considerations: 'There were many monasteries in and around Jericho – mainly Greek-Orthodox – and often inaccessible by the choice of their founders. Although fortified to withstand robbers and Bedouin forays, none could hold up an invading Moslem army.'²⁵

A similar opinion presenting Frankish fortresses as the answer to external military threats emanating from a severe lack of manpower appears in an early study by Meron Benvenisti, *The Crusader Fortresses in the State of Israel* [*sic!*]: *Description and History*, which appeared in Hebrew in the mid-1960s. According to the young Benvenisti, the fundamental objective of Crusader strategy was two-fold: (a) to mark the boundaries along the desert frontier and thus prevent a dangerous concentration of Muslim forces along the borders; (b) to cut overland

²³ *Ibid.*, 285.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 285–86.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 286.

communications between two centres of hostile power, Syria and Egypt. 'Although hatred and religious envy prevailed between the Sunnite Seljuks in the north and the Shi'ite Fatimids in the south', wrote Benvenisti immediately before the 1967 war, 'nevertheless the danger was ever present that they would sink their religious differences in the face of the common enemy'.²⁶

It is difficult to overlook the similarity between these interpretations of Crusader strategy and the fundamentals of Israeli strategic thinking in the mid-1960s: fear of a concentration of enemy forces along the borders and the dangers inherent in pan-Arab unity. On the other hand, it is just as difficult to find any relevance between these assertions and the reality of Crusader times: Was it really possible for fortresses to prevent enemy concentrations along the borders? Would they actually be able to sever the overland link between Damascus and Cairo? Were the Franks, even at the height of their military power under Amalric I, able to prevent Nur al-Din from sending help to his ally in Egypt? Nevertheless, Benvenisti combined Deschamps' premise – that most of the fortresses had been built to protect one of the north–south or east–west thoroughfares of the kingdom – with Prawer's assumption that external danger, lack of manpower, and the need to provide domestic security were the major considerations influencing the establishment of fortresses and their location.

With such a point of view, it is understandable why Benvenisti also accepted the opinion that the fortresses were in visual contact with one another.²⁷ If they did indeed form a unified defensive network, pre-planned visual contact would significantly strengthen it. Indeed, in a single case – the siege of Karak in 1183 – the Franks lit a large fire on the roof of the fortress so that news of their severe condition would travel to the king in Jerusalem. This episode was described by a thirteenth-century chronicler as customary in Frankish defence of castles. 'It is customary', wrote Ernoul,

that when they learn that the Saracens are about to invade the country from any direction whatsoever, the first to spy them lights a beacon. The other places, when they see it, each lights a beacon in turn. Thus the beacons are visible throughout the country; all are well aware that the Saracens are about to invade the country, and thus everyone is prepared for defence.²⁸

Ernoul does not refer to a pre-planned system in which the locations of castles are chosen to suit the needs of visibility from other places, but the

²⁶ Benvenisti, 1970, 4.

²⁷ Cf. Fedden R. and Thomson, J. 1957.

²⁸ Ernoul, 104.

theory captivated the minds of scholars who depicted such systems of communication as being imperative in the choice of locations for castle-building. Thus, in the reconstruction of this assumed chain of castles, communication by beacons was attributed to fortresses that did not and could not have visual contact between them, even when assuming that they were much higher than the remnants we can see today. For example, visual contact between Bayt Jubrin and Blanchgarde was not possible topographically, and the assumed eye contact between the twelfth-century Frankish fortress of Hunin (*Castellum Novum*) and the thirteenth-century Muslim castle of Qala'at al-Subayba would have been useless to both parties . . . The possibility of communication by beacons is not solely a matter of topography. If such communication did exist, this would be decisive proof that there had been a strategy to establish a line of defensive installations and of preconceived and comprehensive planning of a system intended to defend the kingdom's borders.

In a later, more extensive work Benvenisti presented a somewhat more moderate and flexible interpretation of the role of the Crusader fortresses. In this book he was highly critical of the tendency to provide functional definitions for historical and archaeological sites. Though admitting that each fortress had been built to play a specific role, he claimed that the original function might be transformed with time as historical conditions changed after the construction of the fortresses; those that had originally been built as border fortresses became administrative centres when the border moved further away, and the opposite was also true, as administrative centres became part of the border due to hostile invasions. Furthermore, certain fortresses were from the outset intended to fill several functions and it is a difficult task to determine retrospectively the primary reason for their establishment, and certainly one should not rely on assumptions as to the original functions in order to use them to classify the fortresses.

But Benvenisti does not consistently follow even his own reasoning. In a later chapter of the same work, in which he discusses 'border fortresses', he once again has recourse to the geographic principles of Rey, Deschamps, and Prawer when he compares the Crusader fortresses to the Roman *limes*. He further claims that the steep topography of Mount Lebanon eliminated the need to build fortresses there, that those established in Galilee blocked the routes from Damascus to the heart of the kingdom, and that the fortresses south of Amman formed a continuous chain of defensive installations that severed communications between Syria and Egypt.

Borders, frontiers, and centres

Are the terms ‘border’ and ‘border line’ synonymous? Is the linear model the only possible means by which to define a boundary? Is there any other method, other than the demarcation of a single boundary line, of depicting the confines of suzerainty and territorial lordship? Is it plausible that a political entity, even a medieval one, could exist without defined border lines? As I have maintained in chapter 8, many of the scholars who dealt with the history of the Frankish kingdom assumed as a matter of fact that the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem had external political boundaries, that the terms border and border line were synonymous, that borders were usually natural borders, and that there was a connection between border lines and castles.¹

Controversy arose primarily concerning how borders were defended and the role of castles. Were castles located along the borders in order to defend them, or were the linear borders demarcated on the basis of the castles’ locations? Only very few scholars agreed with Raymond Smail, who rejected *in toto* the assumption that castles were erected to prevent the incursion of enemies into the kingdom from across its external border lines. Other scholars (especially Deschamps, but also Pringle, to a lesser degree) assigned greater importance to the assumed connection between highways and roads and castle locations. However, it would seem that none of them rejected the basic assumption that a political border did indeed separate the Crusader kingdom from its neighbours. Both Prawer and Benvenisti accepted the view that borders and their defence are indispensable for an understanding of Crusader defence strategy.

Steadfast acceptance of borders as a key concept in the makeup of medieval states is not unique to the students of the Frankish settlement in the Levant. Most medievalists who studied various areas in Europe

¹ See Chapter 8.

adopted the concept of borders as being characteristic of the political entities – estates, provinces, and states – with which they were dealing. Their assumption was that a border, any border, fills a basic psychological requirement and, by its very presence, enables the communal existence of diverse social groups having different requirements.

No one disputes this argument. Property and inter-personal boundaries form the basis of any ethical and religious doctrines and regulate relationships between human beings. True, certain cultures have different interpretations of the proper relationships between genders or age groups and set different rules concerning property, but all are based upon clear demarcation of behavioural border lines. Criminal law and ethical doctrines cannot exist without such lines. The tendency to consider borders as an essential characteristic of all civilisations is also based on the importance attributed to territory and its defence among animals. One may say, therefore, that demarcation of boundaries is as old as the history of human civilisation, or – as Bernard Guenée put it – ‘Il n’y a pas de vie possible sans limites précises.’²

All this notwithstanding, the inclination to draw a parallel between borders separating political entities, as well as boundaries of body and property, and what seems to be an obvious conclusion – that historical political entities had clearly defined linear borders – is not self-evident. Political borders are characteristic of modern nation-states, but did they exist in Antiquity and the Middle Ages as well? In other words, the fundamental issues upon which I would like to focus are not whether boundaries are needed, or whether it is possible to live without well-defined body and property limits, but whether political borders existed in the Middle Ages, and whether there was a causal relationship between the location of castles and the borders of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.

The answer seems to be very simple. The connection between boundaries of property (especially fields) and political borders is already made in the Bible. ‘Border’ in Hebrew (*gevul*) has two different meanings, both of which are found in the Bible: (a) the line that separates one place (a field, city, country, and so forth) from another; (b) a domain, the territory enclosed by boundaries.

Gevul in its first sense appears in Genesis 10:19: ‘And the border of the Canaanite was from Zidon.’ In his commentary on this passage Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki, an important medieval commentator on the

² Guenée, 1986, 12.

Bible who lived in Troyes, northern France, at the time of the First Crusade) did not attribute a linear character to borders but wrote: 'The border of the Canaanite [means] the end of his country. Every border in the Bible means end and edge.'

As for *gevul* in the sense of an entire territory, one example is in Deuteronomy 11:24: 'Every place whereon the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness, and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the hinder sea shall be your border.' Another instance is found in Deuteronomy 28:40, where we read: 'Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy borders.'

It is sometimes difficult to determine to which meaning the biblical author was referring. The text of Exodus 10:4 reads: 'tomorrow I will bring locusts into thy border', and a bit further on, in 10:14, the relevant passage is: 'And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the borders of Egypt.' A modern Hebrew commentary on the Bible, *Da'at Mikra*, notes here: 'Border is the line that demarcates the territory, and also the territory demarcated by the line.' Another commentary on this same passage reads: "'thy [actual] border.'" The locusts will first rest in the borders of Egypt, and from there will enter the Land [of Israel] and cover it, as is related in the continuation.' Obviously, the commentators prefer the lineal meaning of 'border'.

The classical meanings of the word *finis* are similar; this is how they are defined in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*:

1. (a) The boundary of a territory or other area, or the line marking it.
(b) The areas specified or implied, a frontier.
(c) An object marking a boundary.
2. The land lying within set limits, territory, domain (of a state, individual etc.).

Finis, therefore, refers both to a territory and to the border line delimiting it. But are *finis* and 'border line' synonyms? Was the linear model the only way, or even the principal one, to demarcate areas of medieval rule and suzerainty? Is it possible to assume that a political entity could exist without defined borders?

Scholarly interest in political boundaries has had its ups and downs during the past 150 years. In periods when nationalist movements were at their height (from the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the first half of the twentieth century), German and French scholars devoted much attention to political borders and their significance for the national and political discourse. The issue of the national belonging of Alsace was at the

basis of many such studies and influenced the development of various intellectual trends concerning the origin of national borders. Academic interest in borders waned somewhat after World War II when they were no longer the central issue in international conflicts. Furthermore, the fact that international law tends to preserve late colonialist border lines has turned most highly charged national territorial controversies into historical-legalistic discussions concerning the credibility of documents and maps dating from the late colonial period. Such was the outcome of the controversy between Israel and Egypt over Taba, the demarcation of the present Israeli–Lebanese border, or the controversy between Israel and Syria over the north-eastern shores of the Sea of Galilee. The controversy is no longer about the correct borders or those most suitable for a state, nor is anyone concerned with issues such as ‘natural borders’ or the *Lebensraum* necessary for a nation’s existence. The fact that considerations which dictated the demarcation of colonialist borders were not always matter-of-fact is irrelevant today because colonialist border lines are sacrosanct even in the post-colonial period.

This is not the case in relation to Israel, where public discussion of its proper future border lines continues with vigour. Since its independence, and certainly in the four decades since the June 1967 war, Israel, a modern nation-state in every respect, continues to exist without agreed-upon and clearly defined borders with its neighbours. One facet of the controversy within Israeli society on this question touches upon the issue of whether the source of legitimacy for its borders lies in ancient history and Holy Scripture or in colonial agreements. Even the meaning of ‘borders’ is undergoing a process of deconstruction as Israelis are forced to differentiate between ‘security borders,’ economic borders, and a strongly fortified border line that cuts right through the territory that is in fact under Israeli control.

WERE THERE POLITICAL BORDERS IN ANTIQUITY?

In a book published by Benjamin Isaac in 1990,³ he returned to a discussion of borders in classical times, in the course of which he also reopened the controversy over whether classical concepts of borders are relevant to political deliberations today. Isaac casts doubt upon the widely held interpretation of the Roman *limes*. He maintained that

³ Isaac is an Israeli scholar and a member of the Israel Academy of Sciences. He himself refers to his Israeli identity at the beginning of his discussion of Roman borders. See Isaac, 1990, 3.

the political boundary of the Empire was irrelevant as a concept, and the [Roman] military boundary was never organized as a 'line of defense' . . . The limits of the empire, if at all defined, were expressed in terms of power and military action. The only clearly demarcated boundaries were those of the provinces.⁴

According to Isaac, the fact that a certain Roman province was defended during a specific period of time by a wall does not prove the existence of a border line. It might simply indicate that during a specific period there was a threat which necessitated the building of a wall, or that there was some need to display imperial power in a certain space, but this does not mean that the wall thus built marked the limits of the empire. Moreover, especially in the eastern *limes*, Roman power was manifested tens, and even hundreds, of miles beyond the *limes*, which allegedly signified the limits of the empire. In many other cases the security of the Roman empire was dependent upon indigenous loyal tribes who ruled regions extending both inside and outside the alleged Roman border lines. How should we define border lines in such cases?

In fact, says Isaac, it is the modern traveller and scholar who attributes to the *limes* all the meanings of a boundary line. The Roman sources themselves are mute concerning the existence of border lines, and it was modern scholarship which assumed that 'the Romans were capable of realizing in practice what they could not define verbally'.⁵

The assumption that the Roman Empire had clearly defined borders is based upon other, veiled, suppositions such as, for example, that the Roman authorities were capable of carrying out the geographical planning of the empire and of having rational recourse to linear lines of geographical demarcation. Isaac disagrees with such assumptions and at the same time refutes the tendency to make *limes* a synonym for linear imperial borders. In fact, he says, there is no term in Latin to denote how the term *limes* is used in modern studies – i.e., a defensible linear border – and therefore it is not justified to term any 'line of fortresses' along a frontier a *limes*. He claims that the term *limes* was rarely used before the fourth century CE, and even later it generally referred to a frontier area under the command of a *dux*. *Limes* is therefore an administrative zone that is always mentioned as something separate from the body of the empire. In no case

⁴ Isaac, 1990, 3. For a discussion of his ideas see Chapter 9, 'Frontier Policy – Grand Strategy?' 372–418.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 374–75.

is a *limes* described as a row of military installations erected for defensive purposes, even though that is exactly how it is understood today.

A similar idea was raised by Ralph Brauer, the translator of al-Idrisi's *Book of Roger*, who doubted the relevance of the concept of 'border lines' for Islamic history, claiming that 'apart from sea frontiers, sharply defined boundary lines within the Islamic Empire were either non-existent or of little practical importance – a conclusion that is well in accord with the geographers' texts and cartography'.⁶ Brauer proposed interesting interpretations of the connection between boundaries and frontiers, to which we shall return.

The existence of political borders in the Middle Ages has often been the subject of research by scholars involved in studying the historical political geography of that period. They are not of one opinion: the majority believes that a linear demarcation of medieval political entities did in fact exist,⁷ while the minority doubts the relevance of such linear borders to medieval life.⁸ Even the few syntheses, which tried to bridge the gap between those who believe that there were such borders and those who deny their existence, did not result in a new conceptual outlook on borders in the Middle Ages.⁹

ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF MEDIEVAL BORDERS

Historians who believe that medieval political borders did exist have very few doubts on the matter. Bernard Guenée does admit that 'the search for feudal borders is frustrating because such borders are not permanent and precise and because it is even difficult to draw and describe them with exactitude'. But further on, he says:

Thanks to the efforts of French historians during the past four decades, we have been able to bring to light in northern France, in Normandy and Burgundy,

⁶ Brauer, 1995, 1–73. For this quotation see p. 36; Brauer follows Spuler who already in 1970 wrote: 'Trading activities were often not even stopped when there was a state of war between parts of the Islamic world . . . ' and 'caravans often having a free way through the rows of opposed armies'. See Spuler, 1970, 11.

⁷ See among many other works, Dion, 1947; Richard, 1952, 85–101; Hubert, 1955, II, 14–30; Demotz, 1979, 95–116; Guenée, 1986, II, 11–33; Nordman, 1986, in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. II, *La Nation*, 35–61; Musset, 1989, 309–18; Sahlins, 1990, 1423–51.

⁸ For example, Zeller, 1933, 305–33; 1936, 115–31; Febvre, 1928, 31–34; 1947, 205–07; 1962, 11–24; Dupont-Ferrier, 1942, 62–77. The idea was current after the First World War I: Bonenfant, 1954, 73–79; Genicot, 1970, 29–42.

⁹ The most important syntheses so far are the works of Pounds, 1951, 146–57; Girard d'Albissin, 1969, 390–407; Schlessler, 1984, 159–73.

boundaries that were precise, linear, and as enduring as possible. These boundaries existed in the twelfth century, as well as three hundred years earlier. True, there are complications . . . but the boundaries were precise . . . since the villagers *had to know* just where did their pasture lie, to which lords *they must* pay taxes, and to whom they owed tithes.¹⁰

Out of this economic necessity Guenée also infers a political necessity, concluding that every area that was relatively densely settled had to have boundaries.¹¹ He, as well as many scholars who held similar opinions, referred mainly to cases in which precise boundaries were marked between feudal estates, even pointing to some instances in which physical markings were used to demarcate them.¹² These at first were objects found in the landscape, such as pits, trees, springs, and rivers, but in time man-made conventional markings, such as ditches, were also employed, though these cases were very rare.¹³ On other occasions, as in the case of the line separating the France of Philip II Augustus from Normandy, the hostile rulers only denoted a spot half-way between Normandy in the west and the territory of Philip II Augustus in the east as the border between them.¹⁴ There were, of course, similar boundaries between estates in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.¹⁵

Mark Rabuck, who studied the borders and frontiers of Anglo-Saxon England, also concludes that delimiting boundaries was a fundamental human act which filled a basic need, but he does not agree that demarcating international borders was also such a fundamental necessity. A border, he maintains, is not created by a one-time decision, and it ceases to exist when the two communities which it separates no longer sense a need for it, or when neither side has the power to make its neighbours respect the border line. He also says that it is difficult to define with precision a medieval state or governing entity, and even more difficult to define the character of the authority that ruled it.¹⁶

¹⁰ Guenée, 1986, II–13. (My emphasis, R.E.)

¹¹ See Richard, 1952, 101–02; Hubert, 1955, 23–24; Demotz, 1979, 102–04; Tucuo-Chala, 1979, 123; Wilsdorf-Colin, 1979, 180–84.

¹² Duvernoy, 1888; Chaume, 1944; Darby, 1934.

¹³ See also Lemarignier, 1945, 141–42; Scholz, 1970, *sub anno* 808, describes a rampart built in Jutland during the eighth and ninth centuries: '[Godfrid the Danish King] . . . decided to fortify the border of his kingdom against Saxony with a rampart, so that a protective bulwark would stretch from the eastern bay, called Ostersalt, as far as the western sea, along the entire northern bank of the river Eider . . . and broken by a single gate through which wagons and horsemen would be able to leave and enter. After dividing the work among the leaders of his troop he returned home.'

¹⁴ Powicke, 1960, 169–73.

¹⁵ Ellenblum, 1998, 57–63, 87, 176–77; Frankel, 1980.

¹⁶ Rabuck, 1996, 8–10. For difficulty in defining governmental authority, see Cherry, 1987, 146–72.

Rabuck sums up [the first section](#) of his dissertation by expressing his reservations as to the existence of borders in the Middle Ages. Medieval models, he says, placed people and their ethnic ties at the centre of political power, while terms such as ‘land’ and ‘homeland’ played secondary roles. ‘The tidy lines with which mapmakers frame modern nations simply did not exist in the imaginations of the early Middle Ages.’ But this conclusion was diluted in [the second section](#) of his thesis, in which Rabuck has to face up to archaeological findings for which he has no explanation. Here he reaches conclusions which are exactly the opposite of his earlier ones. He is deeply impressed by Offa’s Dike, in eastern Wales, which he describes as being one of the greatest surviving monuments of the Anglo-Saxon period. However, he is also aware that ‘it also presents one of the greatest mysteries of the period, for it represents an anomaly which is virtually invisible in the documentary records’. Despite this statement, Rabuck declares that the rampart marked the border between the kingdoms of Mercia and Powys, yet even he is unsure about the nature of that border and the functions filled by Offa’s Dike. Like other scholars, Rabuck finds it difficult to believe that such a long dike was built without serving as a political border. To his credit, he does not gloss over the difficulties and tries to face up to them. For example, he attempts to explain the missing sections in the dike (which apparently were never completed) as being sections of ‘an “agreed frontier” between Offa’s realm and the Welsh.’ Elsewhere he comes to the opposite conclusion, maintaining that there are sections in which the frontier was dictated, and not agreed upon. Thus, whereas his theoretical discussion points to real difficulties in the accepted model of Anglo-Saxon frontiers, Rabuck uses this very model in his discussion of an archaeological phenomenon for which he has no better explanation.¹⁷

DENYING THE EXISTENCE OF MEDIEVAL POLITICAL BORDERS

Different arguments have been presented by scholars who doubted the existence of political borders in the Middle Ages. Leopold Genicot, for example, has maintained that the modern definition of national borders is incompatible with the conditions of medieval life. Modern borders, he says, demarcate the territory over which a governing authority rules more or less uniformly and by virtue of uniform legal attributes. Medieval

¹⁷ Compare Rabuck, 1996, 74, with 187–88, 199, and 208–14.

governing authorities had two major attributes: the capability to sanction or prevent the building of fortresses, and the ability to establish a system of high justice. No medieval authority was able to enforce both of these throughout all the territory under its control, nor could the power of its authority be uniformly applied over the entire area. It decreased as one moved further away from the seat of power or drew nearer to the 'borders'. Wherever one did find political borders, says Genicot, they were established to meet a specific need and ceased to exist when that need was no longer felt. For similar reasons there were no borders in unpopulated areas or in any area in which neighbouring sedentary civilisations did not clash, for in both these cases there was no need for them.¹⁸

Gustave Dupont-Ferrier went even further, claiming that any attempt to define medieval borders was doomed to failure. Not only did he doubt the existence of medieval international borders in the modern sense of the word, but also the demarcation of parochial borders and boundaries between feudal estates.¹⁹ Even the king of France, he says, was unacquainted with the borders of his own domain for these were not precise or defined. As a result, Dupont-Ferrier proposed an alternative approach, better suited to medieval conditions: an unbroken line on a map would connect the centre of the lordship with areas which accepted its authority, while a broken line would mark those areas over which the centre exerted only partial control or whose ownership was being contested.

Provinces, claims Dupont-Ferrier, underwent rapid changes and did not have permanent, defined borders. In the few cases in which a precise border marking is known, it is generally a single one along a major highway or at a river crossing, and not a consecutive boundary line. At times it is in the form of a stone column, at others a wooden fence, a cross, or a single tree.²⁰ These individual markings become a consecutive line only in our imagination, because we believe that such continuous borders are a real necessity.

¹⁸ Genicot, 1970, esp. 31, and note no. 3, 33; Bonenfant, 1954, 73–79. It should be noted here that Rabuck points to the absence of a no-man's land in Bede's writings. Even the sparsely populated areas in the Peak District and in the marshy lands of the Welland River were attributed to one of the neighbouring authorities, see Rabuck, 1996, 61–62.

¹⁹ Dupont-Ferrier, 1942, 62–77; Dion, 1947, 40 even claims that already in 1789 the exact borders of more than 1,800 parishes throughout France were disputed: 'lors de la convocation des États Généraux de 1789, plus de 1800 paroisses étaient mi-parties ou contestées entre plusieurs bailliages'. Dion, however, did accept the idea of medieval border lines.

²⁰ Bede, II, 2, 134, describes an 'Augustinus Tree' which divides the territory of two tribes 'in confinio Huiccorum et occidentalium Saxonum.'

Dupont-Ferrier maintains that political borders first appeared in France only in the middle of the fifteenth century, and even then residents and rulers were unaware of them. Geographic and cartographic consciousness of the concept of 'borders' developed slowly, fully maturing only when detailed geographic maps began to appear in the middle of the seventeenth century.²¹

'NATURAL FRONTIERS' AND THE COLONIALIST DISCOURSE

'Natural frontiers' was another geographic concept analysed and rejected by those who negated the idea of borders in the Middle Ages. Proponents of the natural frontier theory believed that natural features in the landscape such as rivers, swamplands, and mountain peaks served throughout history as obstacles which limited the geographic expansion of nations. In cases in which there was no congruence between the natural frontier and the political border of an entity, the area between the actual political border and the natural frontier was considered the nation's sphere of future expansion, or its *Lebensraum*. Over the years, natural frontiers became a concept almost synonymous with the borders themselves.

'Natural frontier' is no neutral concept. It carries hidden meanings adopted from the colonialist and nationalist discourses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; it also has far-reaching political significance. The idea that every country (and by analogy the nation living within that country) has natural frontiers gives the nationalist demands of the nation a deterministic character and turns them into claims which cannot be the object of political confrontations or compromises. Since 'nature' itself determined the future borders of the nation, the political division of land resources is in effect fulfilment of the will of nature, or even of the will of God.

The idea of a national *Lebensraum*, which is an extension of the concept of natural frontiers, is also based upon hidden colonialist assumptions. Not only does a country have a minimal geographic expanse which nature forces upon its history, but nature also dictates the *Lebensraum* necessary for the nation's future expansion. Thus, the combination of natural frontiers and *Lebensraum* creates a deterministic legitimisation of colonialist and nationalist aspirations, so that political and economic attempts to

²¹ Dupont-Ferrier, 1942, 62–77; for his attempt to draw the economic map of medieval France see Dupont-Ferrier, 1930; for the need to create a committee for the demarcation of the exact border of the kingdom of France in the south, as early as the sixteenth century, see Stein and Le Grand, 1905.

gain control of a territory become a legitimate claim grounded in deterministic natural rights.²² The connection between the colonialist and nationalist discourses becomes even closer when 'natural frontiers' are transformed into 'historical frontiers'. The fact that the *Lebensraum*, or part of it, once belonged to the nation which presently claims it lends even greater force to those claims. In this manner, *Lebensraum* is transformed from a vague future right into a property claim, a demand to return lost property to its rightful owner. Thus, the concept of historic frontiers, in its various metamorphoses, provides the connection among the deterministic geographic discourse, the nationalist discourse, and the colonialist discourse.

The concept of France's natural frontiers, which includes the contested region of the Rhine Valley, was apparently first expounded only in the eighteenth century.²³ It became increasingly popular, reaching its peak after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. In referring to the natural frontiers of France, Albert Sorel wrote: 'It is geography that dictated French policy, for ever since the sixteenth century, if not from the twelfth century, France has constantly been expanding towards the Atlantic, the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees.'²⁴ Victor Hugo, too, referred indirectly to the issue of natural frontiers in 1842, when he wrote: 'The Rhine . . . has been accorded a special role by Divine Providence. This is the great transverse moat, which separates the south from the north. Divine Providence turned it into a border river, while the fortresses made it a rampart river.'²⁵

The first to doubt the logic behind the 'natural frontier' theory was the pacifist French historian Gaston Zeller. Born in Clermont-Ferrand in 1890, he taught for thirteen years at the University of Strasbourg in the Rhine Valley where, in 1933, he replaced Lucien Febvre as professor of modern history. Writing in the period between the two world wars, a period of intense nationalistic passions, Zeller's objective was to show that the ideology of natural frontiers was irrelevant from the very outset. From the perspective of historical fact, he claimed, this concept has no meaning

²² See Pounds, 1951, 146.

²³ The natural borders are mentioned in Danton's address to the Convention on 31 January 1793, reprinted in Mathiez, 1924, II, 166: 'The borders [of the Republic] were drawn by Nature, the Rhine, the Ocean, the Pyrenees, and the Alps.' Furthermore, he said, '[it is necessary] to bestow upon France the borders that Nature granted her and to align Galia with France and to return to her any place which once belonged to old Galia'.

²⁴ Sorel, 1897, 244-337, 246.

²⁵ Kammerer, 1990.

at all, and is simply a nationalist ideology that was propagated by means of textbooks and journalistic and nationalist writing.²⁶

Dupont-Ferrier followed suit, sparing no criticism of proponents of the natural frontiers theory. Rivers within the kingdom, he maintained, never served as borders, and if they could be compared to anything it might be said that they served as a means of communication much more than ditches for defence of the nation. Even such a big river as the Rhone cut through the centre of estates and cities.

CREATING A SYNTHESIS BETWEEN THE TWO VIEWPOINTS

Some scholars did try to create a synthesis between the two opposing views regarding the existence of borders in the Middle Ages, but to the best of my knowledge none of them succeeded in settling the contradiction.²⁷ The customary tactics to avoid the inconsistency remained to expand the dimensions of the medieval border line from an actual dimensionless line to a strip several kilometres wide, or to look for hints of the absent boundaries and borders. Other tactics were the interpretation of agreements dividing the taxes of a certain region as referring to border lines, or the demarcation of imaginary lines between neighbouring and opposing centres as being the border lines between them.

Such attempts have turned the question of medieval borders into a complex methodological issue: how could we decide where the border ran when the income of a certain territory, such as the Golan in the north of the Latin Kingdom, was divided between two alien powers?²⁸ Should we consider the territory to be within the border of one or both? Or should we set the border arbitrarily in the middle? Is the very need for a certificate of safe-conduct indicative of the existence of a boundary line, or do we need additional indications? Would one treaty or one obscure text be enough to establish a medieval border line or would a continuity of political deeds be necessary? In the case of dependent political entities or tribes, how could we determine whether the actual border line was closer to the core or to the periphery of the dependent political entity or

²⁶ Zeller, 1933 and 1936. The article he wrote in 1936 at the height of the German and French territorial frenzy was called 'History of a false idea. . .'; see also Kammerer, 1990. Sahlins, 1990, 1423–24, challenges Zeller's ideas that natural borders were meaningless in the early modern period.

²⁷ See Pounds, 1951; Schlesser, 1984; Girard d'Albissin, 1969.

²⁸ According to Muslim sources the agreement which was signed for the first time in 1108 continued to exist until the battle of Hattin. See 'Imad al-Din as quoted by Abu Shama, ed. *RHC*, v, 277.

tribe? We might continue with such questions *ad nauseam*, but the real question – and, in my opinion, the answer as well – lie elsewhere.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEDIEVAL
AND MODERN BORDERS?

In my opinion, the question of whether there were borders in the Middle Ages is not a technical one which can be answered with a better definition of 'border' or by a widening of the line. This is so because behind the very assumption that medieval states had fixed borders lie other, concealed, assumptions relating to concepts of sovereignty, to responsibility for the fate of subjects, and to geographic or even cartographic knowledge on the part of rulers. In other words, I believe that the development of well-demarcated border lines is closely related to the development of modern states.

The modern state, unlike medieval political entities, is defined by its border, and modern borders outline a range of attributes which are characteristic of the sovereignty of the modern state alone. Crossing a symbolic imaginary line, which usually is not even on the actual border but could be an artificial line drawn in the middle of the arrival hall of an international air or sea port, brings the modern traveller to a different world, full of political and national symbols: passports testifying to various nationalities as well as different languages, monetary and fiscal systems, flags and uniforms, customs regulations, criminal laws, and traffic laws. In the modern nation-state we find control points, bearing national insignias, along its border. Their purpose is to control the movement of people, merchandise, and ideas, the earliest of such limitations relating to the smuggling of arms, slaves, and ivory, but over the years many others have been added. A modern state is defined by the geographical space in which all these characteristics are found, and the very existence of borders stems from the existence of modern nation-states.

Modern international borders are generally more clearly demarcated than internal boundaries, even though the latter are no less important to the country's residents than the borders with its neighbours. Internal boundaries decide, for example, where people vote, how much tax they have to pay, in which school their children will study, and so forth, but they are not marked on the ground. Those who need this information will find it on maps posted in municipal offices. International borders, on the other hand, are generally marked on the ground because states wish that

the border line be clear to their neighbours and visitors, as well as to their own citizens.

The application of a modern border implies a certain knowledge of cartography, and definitely an intimate perception of geography.²⁹ One should therefore be very cautious in assuming that the more or less linear model is the only possible way to define a political boundary and that it existed in the Middle Ages as well. Medieval political communities are more easily characterised by their centres or by common association with a ruler than by their physical space. Likewise, kings were more often identified not by the lands they ruled but through association with the people who owed them loyalty. In chronicles and legal documents, the nomenclature of political identity is established by reference to the subject people, usually referring to their ethnic identity. The king of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, for example, is usually referred to as king of the Latins in Jerusalem. Thus, the kingdom is defined by an ethnic identity and geographical centre: Latins and Jerusalem.³⁰ Similarly, the difference between *Rex Anglorum* and *Rex Angliae*, or between *Rex Francorum* and *Rex Franciae*, is significant.³¹ The same definitely holds true for the early Middle Ages: Bede refers to the king of Northumbria as *Rex Nordanhymbrorum*, which means king of the Northumbrians.³² Margaret Lügge has pointed out that at least until the end of the twelfth century the name *Francia* did not refer to all the territory which was under the jurisdiction of the king of France.³³

The complex borders of medieval political entities cannot be compared with the uniform and multi-faceted borders of the modern nation state. Medieval borders were more complex because the concept of statehood had not yet crystallised while the future modern attributes of sovereignty were still conceived as separable. There was no essential overlapping between the geographic limits of suzerainty and political power, on the one hand, and legal, fiscal, or ethnic borders, on the other. Shared sovereign rights were the rule, and one could live according to the customs of a province without coming under the jurisdiction of its prince.

²⁹ For a detailed discussion of the modern development of the term 'border' see Prescott, 1990.

³⁰ 'Ego Balduinus, dei gratia rex Ierusalem Latinorum primus', William of Tyre, II, 12, 514.

³¹ For the first appearance of *Rex Angliae* being *Rex Anglorum* in 1175, see Delisle, 1907. For the use of *Rex Anglorum* in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, see *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum, passim*. It should be noticed that the expression *Philippus Rex Franciae* appears regularly in the opening protocol of French royal letters only from 1204 onwards, see Teulet, 1863, I, 159a, 187b, 254b, 291b, etc.

³² Rabuck, 1996, 70.

³³ Lügge, 1960, 173.

Every person knew where lay the boundary of his property and what belonged to his neighbour. But such a property could have been divided between two or more rulers. The owner knew to whom he was obliged to pay taxes and offer gifts on religious holidays, who would try him if he committed a heinous offence, and who would judge him if he committed a lesser crime. In the event of war, he usually knew where danger lay and on whose side he should enlist in order to fulfil his *auxilium* duties. But all these spheres did not necessarily overlap. Not in every case were there overland connections between cities and their lords; the control by lords of cities which were purportedly outside the boundaries of their property is a fact also known from the Latin East.³⁴

When we speak today of borders we think of modern multifunctional borders. But when we refer to the suzerainty of a medieval ruler we cannot speak of comprehensive boundaries or sovereignty. We can refer to where the ruler minted his coins, where the castles which were loyal to him were located, where castles could not be built without his authorisation, in what areas and times castles were built despite his strong objection, and where lay his personal domain, from which he received his personal income, and so forth. Each attribute will have a boundary, but their lines will vary, be inexact, and certainly will not overlap. In short, we cannot speak of a well-defined zone surrounded by boundaries, but rather about spheres of varying degrees of influence. As persons who were raised in a world of modern nation-states, we find it hard to understand how people lived among so many political spheres, but medieval and even Roman people did. They did not find it hard to conceive that rival rulers could own property on both sides of the so-called border and that they could collect taxes from their property.³⁵ We hear of no objections to donations of property made by the king of Jerusalem in the alien Fatimid territory of Ascalon,³⁶ or in the allegedly inaccessible Golan and Hauran regions.

³⁴ For the case of Atalia (Antalia), which had no connection to Constantinople or to the emperor see William of Tyre, 16, 26, 753; for another city far away in the Hauran, which was under the rule of a certain Frankish knight (*Adratum, nunc autem vulgari appellatione dicitur civitas Bernardi de Stampis*) see William of Tyre, 16, 10, 728. Ascalon too did not have any direct connection with Egypt.

³⁵ Ibn al-Qalanisi describes such an agreement, concluded between Baldwin I and the Muslims in 503 (1109–10) in Baalbek, concerning the corn of the Baq'a. Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 93, 106. For the division of ruined Sidon between the Franks and the Muslims in 1228 see Ibn Wasil, Mufaridj, IV, 235. For the division of villages in the neighbourhood of Montferrand between the Franks and the Muslims see Ibn Wasil, v, 67.

³⁶ Thus the priory of Bethlehem became the cathedral of Ascalon and received the villages of Zeophir and Carcapha while Ascalon itself and both villages were still under Muslim rule, see William of Tyre, II, 12, 513.

That, of course, does not exclude the existence of any type of medieval border lines. Boundaries of fields, dioceses, and villages are indispensable and usually linear and well demarcated, even in the twelfth century.³⁷ It does not even exclude the existence of certain political borders between bigger political entities. There were instances in which different friendly or hostile political entities created demarcations which could be called border lines. No doubt also there were certain rivers or mountain summits which were admitted as being *de facto* natural borders.³⁸ But the 'psychological and practical' need for field or village boundaries does not necessarily imply the existence of boundaries of a higher political order.

The fact that boundaries are indispensable on one level and not on others is illustrated by the absence of any explicit reference to external boundary lines in the chronicle of William of Tyre. William, who wrote most of his chronicle while occupying the See of Tyre, took a profound interest in the history and politics of boundary lines because he was personally engaged in a debate concerning the boundaries between the patriarchies of Antioch and Jerusalem, which he claimed to be wrongly demarcated.³⁹ However, William's only allusion to Frankish political border lines is a short paragraph which refers to the internal boundaries between the Frankish principalities, and even there William refers only to the several points which were situated along the maritime coastal road. He does not mention any of the eastern borders, which were supposed to be more important because they faced the Muslim enemy.⁴⁰ Thus, the idea of a well-demarcated international boundary line, which is borrowed from

³⁷ See, for example, Holy Sepulchre, no. 57, 1162, 149; Josaphat, Kohler *ROL*, 7 (1889), no. 46, 1185, 155; Holy Sepulchre, no. 121, 1158–59, 247; Holy Sepulchre, no. 62, 1132, 156; Strehlke, no. 112, 1257, 91–94. Compare also: Ellenblum, 1998, 57–63, 145–56; Frankel, 1980, 199–201.

³⁸ Such as, for example, the river Sava near Belgrade: William of Tyre, 1, 18, 141: 'usque ad fluvium Maroe, qui eiusdem regni ab oriente limes esse dinoscitur. . . ' Or of the Danube: William of Tyre, 1, 29, 156. William of Tyre writes also that since ancient times, it was agreed that everything which grew on one side of the Euphrates River belonged to the city of Edessa and everything which grew on the other side belonged to the citizens of Harran. William of Tyre, 10, 28 (29), 488–89.

³⁹ William of Tyre, 11, 17, 521; 11, 28, 537; Holy Sepulchre, 1, 33–34; 13, 2, 587–88; 13, 23, 615–18; 14, 13, 646–49; 14, 14, 649–51.

⁴⁰ 'The possessions of the Latins in the East were divided into four principalities. The first to the south was the Kingdom of Jerusalem, which began at the brook between Jubail and Beirut, maritime city of the province of Phoenicia, and ended at the desert which is beyond Daron. The second toward the north was the county of Tripoli, which began at the rivulet just mentioned and extended to another stream between Maraclea and Valenia, likewise maritime cities. The third was the principality of Antioch. This began at the last-named rivulet and extended toward the west to Tarsus in Cilicia. The county of Edessa, the fourth division, began at the forest called Marrim and extended out toward the east beyond the Euphrates.' William of Tyre, 16, 29, 756.

the vocabulary of modern geography, was irrelevant to William, as it was for most medieval political entities.

FRANKISH CENTRES OR FRANKISH BORDERS?

I suggest a different approach in which centres replace the border as points of reference. The centre is usually defined by the ruler or one of his agents. Around the ruler, usually an unambiguous entity in the Middle Ages, there was a geographic space in which many of the characteristics of sovereignty were manifested, although the idea of modern political sovereignty was not yet fully developed. The diminishing attributes of sovereignty were dependent on the distance from the centre, but not only on distance. It was never obvious where a certain right ceased to be recognised because orientation was not linear but concentric, and it was definitely not homogeneous in space. People did not always know who their rulers were, nor did they always care. In one of the first references to inter-state borders, near Verdun at the end of the thirteenth century, two regal committees were appointed by the king of France and Rudolph of Bavaria (king of Germany) respectively in order to ascertain if certain *burgi* belonged to France or to Germany. After lengthy deliberations, which included the interrogation of many witnesses, the two commissions reached opposite conclusions: the French committee found that the area under discussion belonged to France whereas the Germans, of course, claimed it for themselves. The two claims were probably well supported by legal charters and reliable testimonies. In any case, another committee was appointed by the government of France 250 years later to deal with the same question. It seems that even in regions of dense settlement and population it was difficult to tell where exactly the alleged international border lay.⁴¹

Another concept which might be relevant to this discussion and exemplifies its difficulties is the existence of castles as symbolising boundaries. True, certain castles or fortified cities were the most obvious symbols of boundaries in later periods, at least from the seventeenth century onward. But is it correct to regard them as clearly indicative of the existence of medieval or earlier boundaries? Is it possible to assume that there was a linear and functional connection between the castles? The very idea of a line of castles is based on the assumption that the area behind the castle is

⁴¹ Havet, 1881, 383–428.

safe, and that danger is to be expected from a specific direction. But insofar as any medieval *châtelain* was concerned, attacks could have come from any direction at any time, and were most certainly not confined to a specific zone requiring protection.

How did the Franks themselves relate to the construction of castles? What can we gather from their descriptions of border lines and of their own perception of the geographical landscape in which they lived? The first large castle whose construction was described in comparative detail was that at Toron, in northern Galilee: 'When the city of Tyre was still held by the infidels . . . Hugh of St Omer made frequent surprise attacks upon Tyre, harassing it as far as the distance of thirty miles between the two cities of Tyre and Tiberias permitted.' And then, says the chronicler,

going back and forth between the two places the soldiers were frequently exposed to danger, because there was no fortress or fortified place of any kind between the two cities whereto they might retreat when followed by the enemy. To ease this difficulty, [Hugh of St Omer] . . . resolved to build a stronghold on the top of the mountains overlooking Tyre, about ten miles distant from that city [i.e., one-third of the way from Tyre to Tiberias].⁴²

Hugh's aim in building this castle was to create a new centre between the two existing alien ones of Tiberias and Tyre. The border of Frankish occupation is not even mentioned, reference being made only to the centres themselves.

A comparable description applies to the castle of Shaubak in Trans-Jordan. In this case boundaries are explicitly mentioned but it seems that 'boundaries' and 'boundary lines' are not synonymous terms. According to William of Tyre:

At this time the Christians had no fortress in the country beyond the river Jordan. Accordingly, the king, desiring to extend the boundaries of the realm in these parts [cupiens rex in partibus illis regni fines dilatare], proposed with the help of God to build a fortress in Arabia Tertia . . . The inhabitants of this place would be able to protect the fields lying below it, which were tributary of the kingdom, from the inroads of the enemy.

The king therefore summoned to arms the forces of his kingdom and built a strongly defended fortress there, calling it Montreal. The place eventually became an agricultural centre for the whole area: 'The spot has the advantage of fertile soil, which produces abundant supplies of grain, wine, and oil. Moreover, it is especially noted for its healthy and

⁴² William of Tyre, II, 5, 502–3, s.a. 1106.

delightful location. This fortress dominated the entire district adjacent to it.⁴³ Thus, the term '*finēs regni*' used by William of Tyre seems to refer not to the outer shell but rather to the entire region defined by the new centre of Shaubak.

William's description of the capture of Arsuf can be similarly interpreted. He records that King Godfrey, wishing to expand the limits of his kingdom (*adiēcit domino regni finēs ampliāre*) made many preparations in order to take Arsuf.⁴⁴ Godfrey failed in his intention, but the later attempt of Baldwin I is described in similar terms: 'Dominus rex Ierosolimorum . . . regni finēs ampliāre sollicitus.' The capture of a city centrally located within the country is described as expanding the borders of the kingdom.⁴⁵

Another instance indicating that territorial continuity was not a prerequisite for a homogeneous kingdom emerges from the Crusaders' approach to the capture of Bosra and the fortress of Sarhad in 1147. Both were far distant from the heart of the Latin Kingdom and the attempt to conquer them placed the Frankish army in danger of annihilation. Yet, when the local ruler proposed signing a pact with the Franks, it was jointly agreed that God would be most pleased should the city of Bosra accept the Christian faith and place itself under the jurisdiction of the kingdom. The distance between Bosra, Sarhad, and the kingdom, or the lack of territorial continuity between them, was not even mentioned.⁴⁶

An additional case can be deduced from the description of the construction of the thirteenth-century castle of *Castellum Peregrinorum* in 'Athlit. Oliver of Paderborn, the chronicler of the Fifth Crusade, describes it in great detail, and discusses why this castle, which when completed was one of the biggest in the Western world, was built.⁴⁷ Oliver puts forward several reasons for the construction of such a castle. The first is that 'the main advantage of the castle is that it enables the Knights Templar to leave Acre in a body, far from the crime and dirt there, and that they would remain there until the repair of the walls of Jerusalem'. Secondly, he describes the castle as having been built in the middle of a rich agricultural area, with fishponds, salt pools, forests, meadows, cultivated fields, gardens, and vineyards. But when relating the strategic advantages

⁴³ *Ibid.*, II, 26, 535, s.a. 1115.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 9, 19, 446.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 10, 13 (14), 468–69; Fulcher of Chartres, 2, 8, 1–7, 393–400.

⁴⁶ William of Tyre, 16, 8, 724.

⁴⁷ Oliverus, 169–72.

of the site, (and not only the economic and moral advantages of living away from the city), he assigns two reasons for the importance of the newly built castle: (a) there were no castles held by the Saracens between Acre and Jerusalem, and therefore they [the Saracens] were assailed and forced to flee and abandon their ploughed fields; (b) 'Athlit was (only) six hours away from the Muslim castle of Mt Tabor and the construction of the Frankish castle apparently led to the destruction of the Muslim one. It was impossible, says Oliver, 'for the Muslim men to peacefully cultivate, plough, or harvest in the plain between the two castles due to fear of our men'. No border line is mentioned; there are only isolated alien centres in a heterogeneous space. The creation of a new centre changes the balance of power between centres and minimises the sphere of influence of one of them. The creation of a large centre was considered to be sufficient reason for the destruction of an existing alien one, since each centre needed some space around it.

A comparison of Oliver's interpretation with the record handed down to us by Muslim chronicler Ibn Wasil, who also described the building of the Muslim castle atop Mt Tabor, is very instructive; it shows that both of them held similar conceptions about the frontier. According to Ibn Wasil's account, it had been built simultaneously with the destruction of the fortress of Kaukab (Belvoir), which it was meant to replace. Sultan al-'Adil himself remained on the spot until construction had been completed, appointing his generals to oversee construction and the hauling of building stones. Ibn Wasil believes that locating the new castle on Mt Tabor was a mistake, for the Franks almost succeeded in taking it. Had it fallen to the Latins, the Muslims would have been unable to recapture it and the Franks, in their turn, could have threatened and attacked all Muslim territories, even cutting off the highway to Egypt[!]. In other words, Ibn Wasil too was of the opinion that control of one centre (Mt Tabor, in this case) was the key to controlling the entire area.⁴⁸

ASSUMED BORDER LINES ALONG THE ITINERARY OF IBN JUBAYR

The itinerary of the Andalusian traveller Ibn Jubayr, who went from Spain to Mecca and back via Baghdad, Damascus, Acre, and Tyre at the height of the Franco-Muslim wars at the beginning of the 1180s, can serve as another example of the non-linear or multi-linear nature of

⁴⁸ Ibn Wasil, III, 209; 215–16.

borders which emanates from the ambiguity of the political situation. Ibn Jubayr is amazed by the coexistence of war and peace between Franks and Muslims:

The fires of discord burn between them and they are even engaged in constant battle, and yet Muslim and Christian travellers will come and go . . . without interference . . . The Christians impose a tax on the Muslims in their land which gives them full security; and likewise the Christian merchants pay a tax upon their goods in Muslim lands. Agreement exists between them, and there is equal treatment in all cases. The soldiers engage themselves in their war, while the people are at peace. . . ⁴⁹

What happened, then, when a traveller passed from one realm to the other?

The answer is provided by Ibn Jubayr, who described his own passage from Damascus to Acre (see Map 9.1). Leaving Damascus with a caravan of merchants on his way to the Frankish maritime city of Acre, he encountered a train of Frankish prisoners taken captive by the Muslims being led into Damascus. Halfway between the village of Bayt-Jann and the city of Baniyas, which was a Muslim centre, he

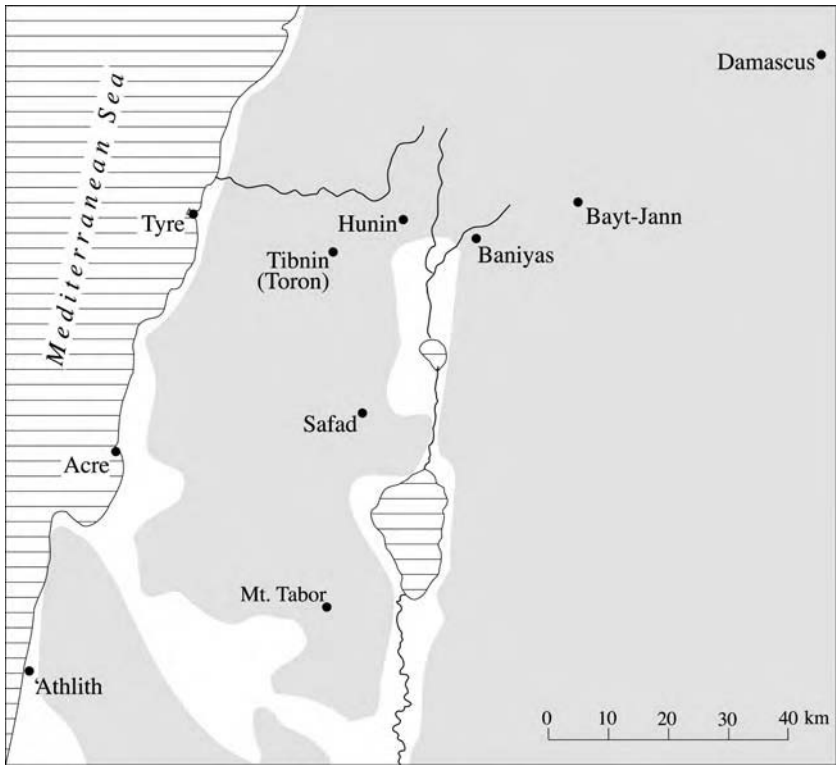
came across a huge oak tree . . . known as the ‘tree of equity’ (*shajarat al-mizan*) which was the boundary between safety and danger [literally: confidence and fear] on this route . . . The Frankish freebooters . . . murder and cut throats of whomever they catch beyond this [tree] on the Muslim side, be it by the length of the arms or a span; but he whom they seize on the Frankish side at a like distance, they release. This is a pact they faithfully observe and is one of the most pleasing and singular conventions of the Franks.

Obviously Ibn Jubayr refers here to the agreement which was mentioned above. But do we really have here, for the first time, an allusion to a linear border? The answer is negative. The tree is clearly inside the so-called ‘Muslim territory’, far behind the Muslim city of Baniyas and on the main road to Damascus.

After crossing the point of no-security, and after leaving the city of Baniyas which he describes as *thughhr*, a frontier city, Ibn Jubayr was yet to cross another boundary line situated in the middle of the Jordan Valley:

Cultivation of the valley itself is [also] divided between the Franks and the Muslims, and there is a boundary known as ‘The boundary of division’. They apportion the crops equally, and their animals are mingled together, yet no wrong takes place between them because of it.

⁴⁹ Ibn Jubayr, *Rihla*, 273.



Map 9.1. Sites mentioned along the itinerary of Ibn Jubayr.

Even then, Ibn Jubayr had not yet reached Frankish territory. The border was not crossed at the neighbouring Frankish castle of Hunin, where he didn't even bother to stop. The caravan made its way to the castle of Toron (Tibnin), and only there, halfway between Baniyas and Acre, did those who came from the Maghrib pay their duties and taxes. The rest of the caravan paid them in the port of Acre, the capital of the Frankish kingdom.

There is no doubt that while travelling between Damascus and Acre Ibn Jubayr had crossed something that in the modern world would have been labelled 'an international border'. But it is impossible to tell when and where he crossed it. Moreover, it is doubtful if such a border is indeed necessary for recording his journey. In his own description there were centres, the most important being Damascus, the centre of Muslim

suzerainty, and Acre, the centre of Frankish suzerainty. There are several minor centres on the way: Baniyas, Hunin, and Toron. There is a point on the way, which signifies the limits of Damascene power, beyond which Damascus was unable to impose order and protect its own subjects. But the Muslim authorities were strong enough to occupy the frontier city or *thughr* of Baniyas, situated many miles to the west of the limits of Damascene power, and they were even strong enough to secure the revenues of half of the northern Jordan Valley.

FRONTIER, 'LIMES', 'MARCHA', AND 'THUGHR'

The situation emerging from the itinerary of Ibn Jubayr exemplifies the real meaning of the word *thughr*, which does not refer to a castle situated along a frontier line, as usually translated, but to a region facing an enemy or to the centre of a region, which is usually identified with the region itself. The rulers of the *thughr*, says Brauer, are usually not powerful enough to impose safety and order, and the rules which apply in such a region are different from those in the centre of the country. The frontier or *thughr* is, therefore, the equivalent of the medieval European 'march' or – if we go even further back in time – to the Roman *limes*.⁵⁰

According to the interpretations of Benjamin Isaac and Israel Shatzman, however, even the *limes* was not the frontier of the Roman empire but denotes an administrative area on its periphery.⁵¹ Shatzman has shown that all documents mentioning the *limes* of southern Palestine refer to it not as a fortified border line but as an extensive territory (comprising all of the Negev and the Sinai Peninsula) under the jurisdiction of a military governor, the *dux*, who holds special legal, administrative, and military authority over the territory subject to him.⁵²

The area of the *limes*, or its parallel, the *thughr*, is a frontier area administered differently than more central areas of the country. Special laws apply there, intended to meet the dangers which, through the *limes*, may jeopardise the centre (the region that is truly important), and its residents are expected to behave differently than those residing in the centre. An interesting testimony relating to different behaviour in the centre of a country and its frontier areas is in the Jewish Talmud (Tossefta, Iruvin, ed. Lieberman, 3:5) which differentiates between how to interpret

⁵⁰ Brauer, 1995, 21–23.

⁵¹ Shatzman, 1983, 2–32.

⁵² Shatzman, 1983, 5–9.

dinei nefashot (i.e., laws referring to cases in which a life is in danger, for which it is permitted to desecrate the Sabbath) in the centre and along the frontier. On the frontier, certain dangers are defined as *dinei nefashot*, and therefore it is permitted to desecrate the Sabbath, whereas the same events do not justify such desecration in the centre. It should be noted that some of the interpreters of this entry are referring to a danger which jeopardises the centre of the country and not the frontier city itself.⁵³

The medieval typical administrative term *marcha* is another concept referring to frontier areas but not to a linear border line. In his important study on the frontier of Wales in the late Middle Ages, Davies touches upon the difference between 'border line' and 'march'.

A march is by definition a broad zone on or beyond the frontiers of a country or an ill-defined and contested district between two countries . . . Such frontier zones are unlikely to have clearly defined boundaries . . . There was no well-defined boundary between England and Wales in the medieval period. If men looked for such a boundary, they could and did on occasion refer to a major landmark such as Offa's Dyke or the River Severn. But . . . it is clear that neither Offa's Dyke nor the Severn could be regarded as more than a metaphorical boundary. They were the figurative phrases for a boundary that did not in fact exist. Instead of a boundary there was a march. The contemporary phraseology exemplifies this clearly enough . . . the March of Wales can only be described, at least by English administrators, in terms of its relationship to English counties.⁵⁴

Frontier, like *marcha* and *limes*, are at one and the same time administrative terms, referring to regions close to those held by the enemy, and psychological terms which define lack of safety. There are safer frontiers and unsafe ones. They also have a dynamic nature: they can be created (especially when the central administration is growing weaker) or dissolved. In the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem too, there were frontier areas which were not held by the Franks but believed to be safe, while other frontier areas that were under their direct control were considered unsafe. For example, in 1147, when the Franks were returning from their unsuccessful attempt to conquer Sarhad and Bostra, the retreating force reached Gadara, above the Yarmuk River. Even though Gadara was not

⁵³ See Rabbi Yoseph Karo's (1488–1575) *Shulhan Arukh*, section *Orah Hayyim* (Rules of the Sabbath, 329:6): 'Gentiles who laid siege to Israelite towns, if they came for money matters [i.e., to plunder], the Sabbath is not desecrated on their account; if they came on matters of lives [i.e., to kill], even if not premeditated, one takes up arms against them and desecrates the Sabbath. And in a city near the frontier, even if they came only [to steal] straw and stubble one desecrates the Sabbath on their account, lest they take the city and from there the country will be easily conquered by them' (my emphasis – R.E.).

⁵⁴ Davies, 1978, 15.

considered to be Frankish territory, they believed that they were crossing a border (*ad quam, quoniam in confinio hostium et nostre regionis sita est*) into their own land (*quod nostri in sua iam se contulerant*). Only then did they succumb to fatigue and bad weather: they rested there and on the morrow continued their way home in small units, in violation of the stringent rules of warfare, because Gadara was still a part of the enemy's frontier.⁵⁵

The Muslims no doubt also had certain areas in which they felt very safe and others in which there was a complete lack of security. Ibn al-Athir tells us of the expedition of Shirkuh from Damascus to help the Egyptians in AH 558 (1163). Nur al-Din, who feared the dangers Shirkuh would encounter on the way, accompanied him through part of the Frankish territory in the vicinity of Damascus to prevent them from interfering with the military column.⁵⁶ However, even though the Franks technically ruled the area they were unable to prevent the movement of Muslim troops, who on more than one occasion easily circumvented Frankish ambushes.⁵⁷

Baniyas, which Ibn Jubayr termed a frontier city, was also seen as such by the Franks. Even when they were in full control of the city, Baniyas was considered as located 'on the border of enemy [territory] and in close proximity to it' (*in confinio hostium posita eisque valde contermina*), so much so, that no one could approach or leave the city without endangering himself unless he joined a well-armed convoy or travelled by secret bypasses.⁵⁸

That this was a frontier area is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the Franks were unable to restore Baniyas' walls in 1157, and that the city was the object of repeated attacks by Nur al-Din in the 1160s. After its fall in 1164 and the Muslim capture of the nearby fortress of Hunin in 1167, the Frankish leaders applied to the West for help, the immediate reason for their appeal being the fall of the city of Baniyas. The letter refers to Baniyas as being 'the key and entrance and refuge for the whole country'.⁵⁹ In this case too, it is the city which is the key, and no mention

⁵⁵ William of Tyre, 16, 13, p. 733.

⁵⁶ Ibn al-Athir, *RHC*, 533. For Nur al-Din going to the 'end of the Frankish land' to prevent them from helping Shawar, see Ibn al-Athir, *RHC*, 535.

⁵⁷ For Shirkuh's success in outflanking the ambush laid for him on his way back from Egypt, see Ibn al-Athir, *RHC*, 537. For another passage through this territory on the way to Egypt, see *ibid*, 547.

⁵⁸ William of Tyre, 18, 12, 826–28.

⁵⁹ '*clavis et porta et defensaculum totius terre Iherosolimitane esse solebat . . .*', Hospital, no. 404, 1169, 279–80. Matthew Paris refers to the castle of Dover, at about the same time as: '*Clavis enim Angliae est.*' See Matthew Paris, III, 28.

is made of a border line. It is curious to note that the Frankish leaders used the word *porta* to describe the frontier city of Baniyas, for the Arabic word *thughr* is related to the root, **ת-ע-ש**, (sh- ʿ- r) which in Hebrew means 'gate'. The transfer of a certain centre from one realm to another entails the transfer of its sphere of influence. Thus, while during the 1160s the city of Baniyas was still considered the '*clavis et porta et defensaculum totius terre Jherosolimitane*', ten years later it became part of a Muslim *thughr*. All the sites which were subject to Baniyas were now considered to be part of the newly created Muslim territory.

A further example dates from 1179. In that year, when the Franks were engaged in building a new castle at Vadum Iacob to the west of the Jordan River, it was considered a part of Muslim territory. 'The Templars of the land of Jerusalem', says the Frankish chronicler Ernoul, 'came to the king and told him that they would build a castle in Muslim territory.' Ernoul's claim is supported by Abu Shama who reports that this fortress was built because the Franks intended to weaken the most vulnerable section of the Muslim *thughr* and make it more difficult to cross the Jordan at this spot.⁶⁰

Another example, touching upon the Eastern Galilee will fully develop my argument. The anonymous description of the visit of Benoit of Alignian, bishop of Marseille, to the Holy Land, in which the reconstruction of the castle of Safad between 1240 and 1265 is described, contains a report of Benoit's visit to Damascus during his pilgrimage to St Mary of Saidnaya. While in the Syrian capital, the bishop was repeatedly asked by the Muslim inhabitants of Damascus if Safad was to be rebuilt. The reason for this recurring interrogation is also furnished: 'They answered that with the building of the castle of Safad, the gates of Damascus would be closed.' Again, no border is mentioned between the two centres, Damascus and Acre. The creation of a third centre, Safad, between them was conceived as a direct threat to the Muslim centre at Damascus and not to any of the alleged border settlements or to the border itself. The narrative of the visit continues in the same vein and tells us that when the bishop reached the ruins of twelfth-century Safad

he had inquired carefully about the surroundings and district of the castle, and why the Saracens were so fearful of its being built. He found that if the castle were constructed, it would be a defence and security and like a shield for the Christians against the Saracens as far as Acre. It would be a strong and formidable

⁶⁰ 'vinrent li Templier en le tiere de Jherusalem au roi, et disent qu'il voloient fermer. I, castiel en tiere de Sarrasins, en .I. Liu c'on apiele le "Wés Jacob", près d'une eve'. Ernoul, 52 and compare with Abu Shama who says that the castle was built in the 'Muslim Thughr', Abu Shama, II, 8.

base for attack and provide facilities and opportunities to make sallies and raids into the land of the Saracens as far as Damascus.

One should read the next paragraph carefully in order to comprehend the role played by this medieval castle:

Due to the construction of this castle, the *Sultan* would lose large sums of money, massive subsidies, and the service of the men and property of those who would otherwise be of the castle, and would also lose in his own land villages, and agriculture, and pasture, and other incomes, since they would not dare to farm the land for fear of the castle. As a result his land would turn to desert and waste . . .

The outcome of its construction could not be clearer.⁶¹

The final example I wish to present in this context is the last cease-fire treaty (*hudna*) concluded between Sultan al-Mansur (Qalawun) and his son al-Salih 'Ali and the representatives of the Franks. The Frankish entity is described as the 'Kingdom of Acre, Sidon and 'Athlit', a reference which was considered scornful by some modern students of the Crusades, as it pointedly refers to the very limited dimensions of the Frankish state.⁶² However, as we have already indicated above, the Frankish rulers referred to themselves as kings of the Latins in Jerusalem, even during the apogee of their rule.

The treaty provides us with a definite list of the localities held by the Franks and of some which were in the possession of the sultan, but it never bothered providing any delineation of the border between them. Modern scholars who dealt with this treaty referred to it, to quote one article, as 'a source concerning the ultimate borders of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem',⁶³ although it is evident that many of the localities were divided between the Franks and the Muslims, and that there were Muslim ones within Frankish-held territory.

* * *

The idea of the medieval world as divided into political entities with geographically defined borders was created during the nineteenth century in a world influenced by nation states and nationalist-oriented historians. The very perception of borders became possible due to the completion of 'the cartographic revolution'. Experts in historical cartography do not agree about the exact period in which linear borders were first introduced

⁶¹ *De constructione castri Saphet*, 34–44 lines 9–295; esp. lines 29–60.

⁶² The most complete version of the treaty which was signed in Cairo on 3 June 1283 (682 AH) was preserved in Qalqashandi, 34–43. See Maqrizi, trans. Quatremère, II, 3, 179–85, 224–35; see also, Holt, 1976, 802–12; Barag, 1979, 197–217.

⁶³ Barag, 1979.

into European international treaties, but none of them date it to a period earlier than the sixteenth century. Clark maintains: 'I have not been able to discover a case of a frontier fixed literally on the map until the year 1718.'⁶⁴ Konvitz asserts that the first time in which an imaginary line, aligning the Alpine mountain peaks, was introduced as the border between France and Savoy was in 1697,⁶⁵ and Buissert dates the first surveyed border line to the reign of Henry IV, at the end of the sixteenth century.⁶⁶ Whatever the date of the introduction of borders into Western politics, since that time the map has triumphed. We cannot visit a foreign country or even an unknown city, let alone read an historical narrative, without referring to maps. Maps are not merely two-dimensional simplifications of a three-dimensional reality; they condition our daily life. But maps have one great disadvantage: one cannot depict ambiguous reality, nor introduce footnotes or too many question marks on them. Cartographic reality suited nineteenth-century nationalist thinking, but it does not fit the way we now understand the complicated medieval world. When the first historical atlases were published in the nineteenth century, they were introduced into a world which was occupied with borders and maps. No one argues, or could have argued then, that it was not possible to use this tool to depict the medieval or Roman worlds. But perhaps now, when national borders have been abolished in Europe, the time has come to reassess the linear cartographic nature of medieval borders.

This anachronistic concept has assumed much more importance today than it held in the Middle Ages. Though medieval people were aware of the concept, the linear border was of little importance both conceptually and in practice. To persons who thought in terms of centres, rather than borders, the country was divided into areas defined by their centres. Regions which the Franks considered as frontier areas were those which they believed to be more prone to enemy attack and over which they found it difficult to impose their rule. Moreover, the frontier areas of the Franks did not have clearly defined borders; in fact, there were times when one could not speak of a Frankish 'frontier' at all. Only when the Muslims began to invade the heart of the kingdom time after time and to threaten its centre, only then did the concept of frontier begin to take root in the consciousness of the Franks, resulting in changes in the manner in which Frankish castles were constructed.

⁶⁴ Clark, 1947, 144.

⁶⁵ Konvitz, 1987, 32–33.

⁶⁶ Buissert, 1984, 72–80.

The geography of fear and the creation of the Frankish frontier

Can the entire area of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem be considered a 'frontier'? Can we accept at face value the claim that security in the Crusader states was at its very worst throughout their entire existence and everywhere that was under Frankish rule? The common answer to these questions is that life in the Frankish Kingdom was, indeed, insecure, and that the very existence of the Frankish settlers was constantly threatened. Such a perception stems, perhaps, from the final tragic results of the Crusades, but it serves as an all-inclusive explanation for the behaviour and settlement patterns of the Franks even during periods of tranquillity. Contending with such questions is a difficult task, particularly so because it is hard to set objective criteria by which the severity of 'a state of insecurity' can be measured, or to try and verify the subjective influences of such a state.

As one who has resided for many years in a city whose citizens do not enjoy a sense of peace and security, I am aware of the subjectivity and transience of 'a feeling of security' and of the importance which people assign to such feelings when making short-term, day-to-day decisions (where to buy, where to spend their recreation time, where to travel) or long-term decisions, such as where to take up residence. From my personal experience, I can testify that a sense of security – or of insecurity – is not an objective matter, which can be quantified, but rather a subjective feeling, which changes with place and time. The degree of adaptation to a given condition is influenced by the conception of what is a 'dangerous area' and by the relative length of the period of insecurity. Places which some consider 'secure' are 'insecure' to others, and vice versa; moreover, the perception of the overall situation is dependent on where one lives. Thus, many who did not live in or visit Israel in 2001–03 were convinced that anyone who resided there during those years was an adventurer risking his own life and that of his family. Tel Avivians thought thus of Jerusalemites, those living in the centre of Jerusalem related in those very

terms to the residents of the suburbs bordering on Palestinian neighbourhoods, and residents of those suburbs to persons living in the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, while many of the latter refer to settlements east of their own settlement as 'really dangerous places'.

The geography of fear is therefore a relative geography, one which cannot be easily measured; this is all the more true when immediate danger lurks overhead. A similar process can be observed when people subjectively define periods of tranquillity: relatively lengthy periods of time without any traumatic event are likely to make those who experience them feel that they are going through a period of 'relative calm'. Obviously, we cannot determine how much time is necessary for a period to be defined as 'calm', for such a definition is in inverse ratio to the intensity of the previous traumatic events: in the most difficult times, a few months (sometimes even a few weeks or days) of quiet is sufficient to make people feel that the storm has passed and such a terrible event will not recur. On the other hand, situations which are *a priori* believed to be unbearable are seen in a different light when they come about, and in the final tally people adjust to situations which they formerly believed it would be impossible to live through.

Public opinion polls, conducted very frequently in modern days, can provide a sense of the public mood and of how security conditions influence it. In the absence of such detailed information for the Middle Ages, it is difficult to set indicators of medieval subjective behaviour, to determine whether the 'state of security' played as significant a role as researchers tend to assign it, and whether persons decided where they would live and what character their settlement would take on the basis of a subjective sense of danger.

Retrospective studies have been conducted over the past few years in the United States and Belgium to measure feelings of insecurity, the length of periods of time during which insecurity is felt, and the relative intensity of such feelings.¹ These studies centred on traumatic events which influenced the United States and Belgium during the twentieth century, the bloodiest and most crisis-filled in human history. The clearest lessons emerging from these studies are that much of the insecurity arose from economic causes, and that psychological crises arising out of precarious security conditions (such as World War II) often lasted only slightly longer than the event which gave rise to them (see Figure 10.1).

¹ See McCann, and Stewin, 1990; Hogenraad, and Grosbois, 1997.

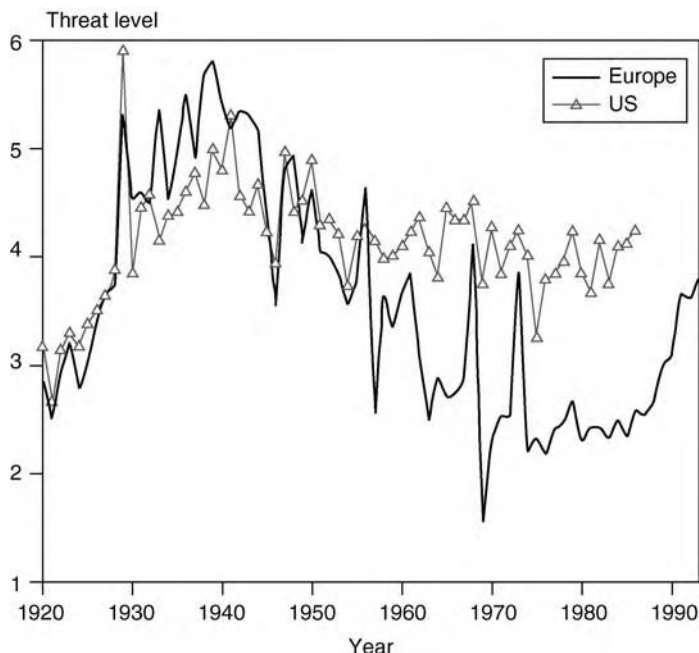


Figure 10.1. The evolution of threat in Europe (1920–93) and the USA (1920–86), from Hogenraad and Grosbois, 1997, based on McCann's and Stewein's data, 1990.

However, even these modern studies are not based upon measurements of people's sense of insecurity, because they were not polled at the time. They rely upon analysis of the opinions of historians who specialise in the twentieth century and, as Hobsbawm has written, 'whose business it is to remember what others forget'.² In other words, modern research too is based on subjective feelings, and not upon analysis of emotions recorded in real time.

Historical sources of the Frankish period are too few to enable a study of the 'geography of fear' in those years. Even a poll of historians, like those conducted in the United States and Belgium, would more than likely be based upon subjective feelings, and not upon facts and documentation. It is therefore difficult to determine whether the 'precarious security conditions' which prevailed during the Frankish period were as influential as they are claimed to be in determining where the Franks did

² Hobsbawm, 1994, 3.

in fact settle, or to compare security conditions in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem with those in contemporary Europe.

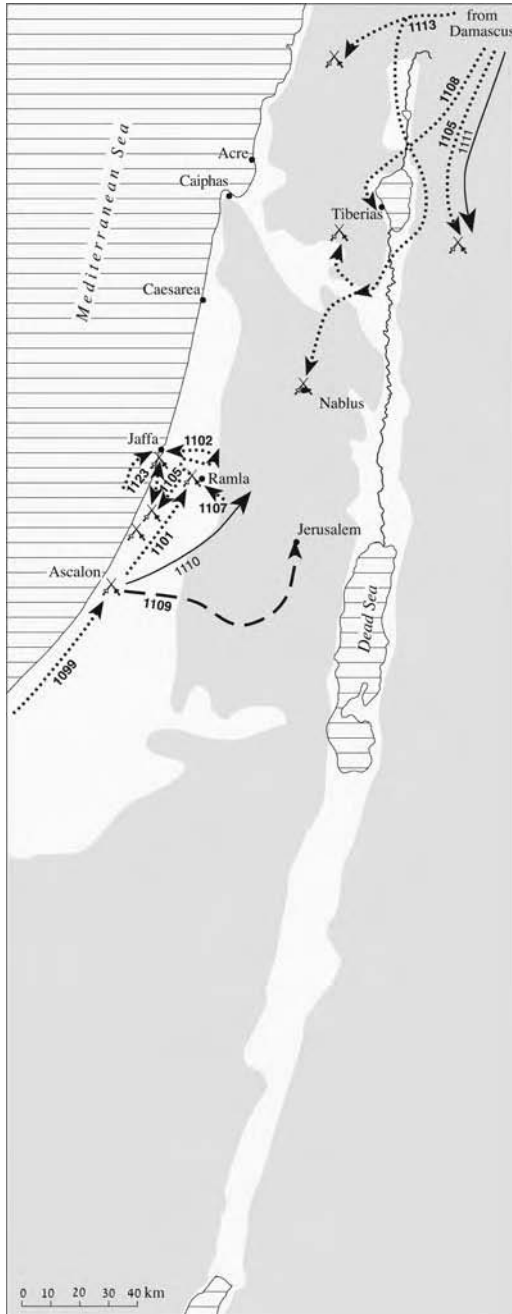
Yet, though it is impossible to quantify the influence of security conditions upon lifestyles, we can have recourse to the abundant information about military confrontations in order to compare the frequency of attacks on both the Muslim and Frankish parties. Contemporary chroniclers, like any other medieval chronicler, devoted much attention to such confrontations and to the locations in which they occurred. Their detailed descriptions enable a quantitative and spatial analysis of the frequency and intensity of the attacks in the different regions of the realm. In this manner we can determine which regions were subject to frequent attacks by the Muslims and which were relatively calm, and which of the periods were marked by intensive military action as opposed to those in which the Franks enjoyed relative calm and tranquillity.

These detailed accounts might allow for a better periodisation of the two centuries of the Frankish period. Instead of an analysis of the 'Crusader period' as a single and undivided period with more or less uniform characteristics it will be divided into more homogeneous sub-periods. Such periodisation and regionalisation will not necessarily enable determination of the sense of personal security or insecurity felt by those who dwelt within the bounds of the Latin Kingdom, but it will allow for the creation of terms of reference based upon specific facts, and not upon generalisations or the subjective interpretations of modern-day historians. Thus, for example, we can avoid relying on the state of panic aroused by specific traumatic events and applying that result, by analogy, to events which occurred many years earlier or later or in other regions of the realm. Thus, for example, we cannot deduce from the fate of the people who lived in the relatively endangered region of Ascalon during the first fifteen years of Frankish rule, or in Trans-Jordan during the 1180s, information regarding the security of persons who lived in the Sharon Plain or western Galilee, areas which enjoyed lengthy periods of peace and tranquillity.

STAGES IN THE MILITARY HISTORY OF THE LATIN KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM ACCORDING TO THE FREQUENCY OF HOSTILITIES

The military history of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem can be divided into three main stages, in accordance with the frequency and quantity of the military clashes between the Franks and their external enemies.

In the first stage, which began already as early as 1099, military confrontations were almost incessant. It is difficult to determine the *terminus ad*



Map 10.1. Major Muslim attacks on the Latin Kingdom (1099–1115).

quem of this stage, but the frequency of attacks seems to have decreased appreciably by the middle of the second decade, almost coming to an end in the mid-1120s.

In the second stage, which apparently began in 1115 (during the reign of Baldwin I), there are only a few mentions of major confrontations which called for a general mobilisation of the Frankish army and threatened the interior of the kingdom. The periods of calm between such episodes grew gradually in length, with much of the kingdom not coming under any external threat at all. On the other hand, during this stage (which continued until the mid-1160s) there were a growing number of attacks initiated by the Franks against their neighbours to the south, south-west, and north of the kingdom. It can therefore be maintained that during this stage the Frankish field armies enjoyed military superiority over their Muslim adversaries.

The third stage began in the mid-1160s, but the external attacks upon the Franks reached the degree of 'incessant pressure' only more than a decade later, after the fall of Vadum Iacob in 1179.

FIRST STAGE, 1099–1115: FREQUENT MILITARY ENGAGEMENTS

This stage, in which the Franks began to establish their settlements and to consolidate their hold on the interior of the country, was marked by a relatively large number of military confrontations (Map 10.1). It was also a period in which Frankish military hegemony increased, as indicated by the conquest of the coastal cities (with the exception of Tyre and Ascalon) and by the routing of Muslim armies, despite repeated attempts at reconquest by the Egyptian and Damascene forces. The southern coastal plain, near Ascalon, was more vulnerable to Muslim attacks than the other regions of the kingdom, though even there the Franks were able to strike at Muslim villages and wreak destruction upon the agricultural hinterland of the Fatimid city.

The historical evidence relating to the struggle in the south shows that neither side was able to subdue its adversary, though both were able repeatedly to deliver a damaging blow to the enemy. There can be no doubt that during this period the threat was continuous and mutual.

As early as 1111, attacks upon his city caused the governor of Ascalon to sign a treaty with the Franks, despite the overt objections of the rulers in Egypt. In 1115 the rulers of Ascalon tried to exploit the fact that the Frankish army was occupied with preparations for a battle against the Turks in the north (which never took place) in order to twice attack Jaffa.

These attacks were repelled by the residents of Jaffa without the help of the army, even though there were only a few defenders, who were still weak from a plague to which they had earlier been subjected. Ascalon's military strength deteriorated with time, so much so that in 1118 its forces were unable to stop Baldwin II's attempt to conquer Egypt. On the eastern front, the Franks were strong enough to raid areas east of the Jordan River and to build castles along the pilgrimage road to Mecca, which was also the main road from Egypt to Syria.³

In the north too, the Latin Kingdom was attacked on several occasions. In 1107 and 1108, the rulers of Damascus and Tyre launched two attacks against Tibnin and Tiberias;⁴ during the second one they even took captive the prince of Galilee. Though these raids were of a local nature and did not put an end to the momentum of the kingdom's expansion, they probably did influence the sense of security or insecurity of Frankish settlers in northern and eastern Galilee.

A more significant Muslim attack against the very heart of the Frankish state was launched in 1113. The invaders, comprising the joint armies of Sharaf al-Dawla Mawdud, of Mosul, and Tughtakin, ruler of Damascus, devastated the Galilee and Samaria, commencing with a siege against Tibnin and Tiberias. The approach of Frankish reinforcements put an end to the siege, but the raid continued in Samaria. The villagers around Nablus rebelled and joined forces with the invaders. Fulcher of Chartres describes this uprising: 'The Saracens subject to us deserted us and as enemies hemmed us in on every side. In addition, the Turks went out from their army in bands to devastate our lands and to send back booty

³ Already in 1102, Albert of Aachen, in describing the Crusader attack on the agricultural surroundings of Ascalon, wrote that 'they destroyed vineyards and crops and all the produce of that year'; Albert of Aachen, IX, 15, 599. He also tells us that in 1106 Baldwin's men 'destroyed vineyards, fig trees, and every other kind of tree', IX, 51, 624. For the peace agreement which the governor of Ascalon sought to sign with the Crusaders in 1111, see Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 108–9; Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, IV-1, 277; Albert of Aachen, XI, 35–37, 680–81; cf. Prawer, 1956, 231–40. On the other hand, for the attack by Ascalon and the Fatimid army on the Christians near Ramla in 1107, in which 400 people were killed, see Albert of Aachen, X, 8, 636–38; for the unsuccessful attack by Ascalon against the Mount Hebron area in 1109, which reached the gates of Jerusalem, see X, 33–35, 646–47; for another attack against the Crusaders on the Jaffa–Jerusalem road in 1109, which apparently originated from Ascalon, see Fulcher of Chartres, II, 37, 514–18; for the attempt to capture Jaffa in 1115, see II, lviii, 4–7, 585–86.

⁴ For the 1107 attack, during which the *burgus* of Tibnin was plundered, see Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 71–75; Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, I, 229–30; William of Tyre, II, 5, 502–503; Albert of Aachen, X, 5–6, 633–34. For the attack of 1108 in which the prince of Galilee was taken captive, Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 86–87; for the attack by Tughtakin on Tiberias in 1121, see William of Tyre, 16, 12, 565–66.

and supplies to their army by means of our Saracens.⁵ After Nablus too was captured by Mawdud's forces, they were joined by additional residents of the region, until:

There was not a Muslim left in the land of the Franks who did not send to the Atabeg begging that he should guarantee him security and confirm him in the possession of his property and a part of the revenue of Nablus was brought to him. Baisan was plundered, and not a single cultivated estate was left between Acre and Jerusalem while the Franks remained blockaded on the hill.⁶

The residents of Ascalon joined in the fray. They attacked the agricultural area outside the walls of Jerusalem and even destroyed the Church of St Stephen, opposite Damascus Gate. This invasion came to naught after Mawdud was murdered in Damascus by an assassin. The assassination signifies the end of this phase of dangerous Muslim attacks. By the end of the same year (1113), or slightly later, Mas'ud, the governor of Tyre, signed a non-aggression pact with the Franks. About a year later (1114) another treaty of non-aggression, which also determined how the income of the Golan would be divided, was signed between Tughtakin and the rulers of the Latin Kingdom.⁷

SECOND STAGE, 1115–1167: A PERIOD OF RELATIVE SECURITY

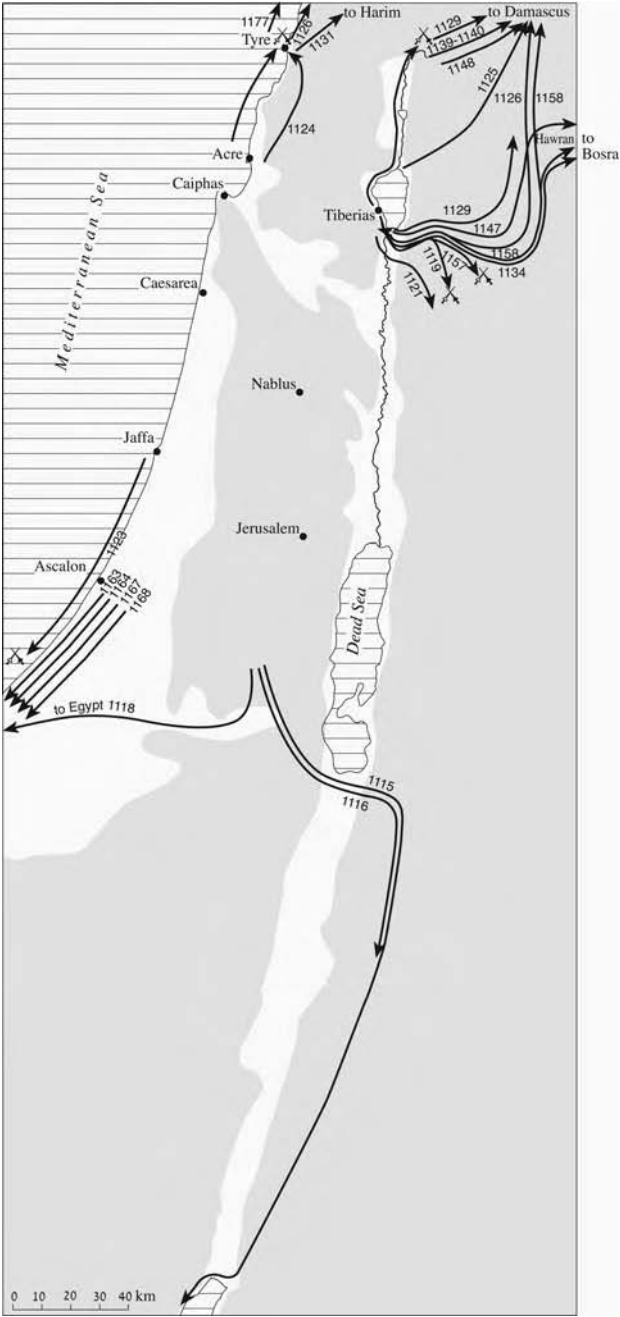
It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when the second and more secure stage began (Map 10.2 and 10.3). I formerly suggested that the first stage came to an end, at the very latest, with the taking of Tyre in 1124,⁸ but now believe that the second stage began earlier, during Baldwin I's successful incursion into Trans-Jordan in 1115, or perhaps even during the failure of Mawdud's invasion of the Latin Kingdom. The decade beginning in 1113 and ending in 1124 can be considered a transitional period during which military threats to the Latin Kingdom decreased considerably. By 1115 the Franks had already consolidated their hold on the country and begun to threaten their neighbours. The first military expeditions deep into neighbouring Muslim countries undoubtedly signify the overturning of the balance of power and the beginning of a period of growing confidence by the Franks

⁵ Fulcher of Chartres, II, xlix, II, 572.

⁶ Ibn al-Qalanisi, ed. Amedroz, 186 (trans. Gibb, 139); see also: Usama Ibn Munqidh, 138–40; William of Tyre, II, 19, 523–25; Albert of Aachen, XII, 9–10, 694–95. Sigeberti Gemblacensis, *Chronica Continuata Anselmi Gemblacensis*, Migne, PL, vol. 160, col. 241.

⁷ Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 147.

⁸ Ellenblum, 1996.



in their military might. The Franks were able to pose military threats to their enemies' centres in Damascus, in the Hawran, and even in Egypt itself.

True, natural calamities such as the earthquake of 1114 or attacks of locusts in 1114, 1117, and 1120 or of the field mice in 1120, certainly led to a sense of insecurity, for – as pointed out earlier in this chapter – economic causes have a greater long-term effect on the populace's sense of security than do military conditions.⁹ But throughout the second stage, which lasted for about fifty years, the Franks enjoyed a state of relative peace and tranquillity.

Ascalon, the object of repeated Frankish attacks, was the only Muslim centre that dared to launch a relatively threatening attack on Frankish territory. However, the attack of 1124 was launched only because the Frankish army was engaged in the siege of Tyre and could not defend Jerusalem. William of Tyre sums up this episode by noting that the citizens left in Jerusalem and its immediate environs were enough to repel the Muslim attack. From Fulcher of Chartres' account too we learn that though the Ascalonite attack did cause some damage, it could not threaten the kingdom:

The men of Ascalon, knowing the fewness of our numbers, were not slow in molesting us when they thought they could weaken us and do us the most damage. They devastated and burned a little village near Jerusalem called Birra and carried off all the petty plunder they found there, along with *their dead and many wounded* [my emphasis – R.E.]. The women and children got into a certain tower built there in our time and thus saved themselves.¹⁰

Ascalon, then, did not cease to be a threat and could still be a nuisance to its nearby vicinity, especially at times when the Frankish army was engaging in important military actions far away. In any event they never gave up attacking isolated villages or passengers on the way.

The bothersome nature of the Ascalonite raids emerges from the description of the pilgrimage of Ranieri, the patron saint of Pisa, to Hebron in the late 1130s. Benincasa, the biographer of Ranieri, relates that the road from Jerusalem to Hebron was dangerous because of the Ascalonites who attacked the travellers.¹¹ A similar danger is still

⁹ See the decisions taken at the Council of Nablus in 1120, and for the state of affairs which led the Frankish settlers to feel that they were in a state of emergency, see Kedar, 1999.

¹⁰ For the Ascalonite attack which reached the village of Birra, see Fulcher of Chartres, III, xxxiii, 1–2, 731–32; William of Tyre says that the inhabitants left in Jerusalem were numerous enough to ward off the attack. William of Tyre, 13, 8, 595.

¹¹ Kedar, 2003, 83.

mentioned in the narrative of Usama Ibn Munqidh, who describes two such attacks which occurred while he was in Ascalon in the early 1150s. Attacks of this kind were the rule of the day in contacts between the Franks and their Muslim neighbours, and Muslim sources are replete with descriptions of similar Frankish raids, and fewer mentions of raids mounted by the Muslims. As noted, Usama describes two such attacks. In the first, the Ascalonites set fire to the granaries of Betgibelin and immediately retired when the Franks stormed out of their fortifications 'next to one another'. A second attack, upon Ibelin, ended with the death of 100 men of Ibelin and the taking of a similar number as captives.¹²

However, scholars tended to overemphasise Frankish descriptions of Muslim raids and ignore similar descriptions of Muslim travellers, villages, and isolated communities being raided by the Franks. Therefore, descriptions and even simple entries testifying to Muslim raids are conceived as reasons which led the Franks to shut themselves behind the walls of the 'castles' and to abstain from settling in the countryside.

Nevertheless, an indication of the true balance of power between Franks and Crusaders in the Ascalon area can be found in the fact that the former were so sure of their military superiority that they began to grant villages located within the Muslim-controlled territory to Frankish lords. Even William of Tyre, who time and again repeated his warning of the danger which Ascalon posed to the Crusader state, noted that already by 1137 only the newly mobilised troops who reached this city dared attack the Franks; the veterans, who had already experienced the taste of war, refrained from engaging in battle.¹³ Even William agrees that the danger from Ascalon had decreased during the 1130s, so much so that it was possible to construct an additional Frankish fortress at Blanchegarde (Tel Tsafit) in 1142. Another indication of the weakness of Ascalon is that in 1150 the Franks were able to build a fortress in the city of Gaza, on the Via Maris between Ascalon and Egypt, without any opposition from Ascalon.¹⁴

¹² Usama, trans. Hitti, 41–42; for a similar event see William of Tyre, II, 20, 525.

¹³ William of Tyre, 14, 22, 659–60.

¹⁴ For the cases of Ibelin and Blanchegarde, see William of Tyre, 15, 24, 706–7; see 15, 25, 707–8; for the case of Gaza, see, 17, 12, 775–77. See the explanation given by William of Tyre for the construction of the castle of Nobe (Bettenuble and, probably, the castle in Yalu) in 1132: 'In the narrow mountain pass, among defiles impossible to avoid, pilgrims were exposed to great danger. Here the people of Ascalon were accustomed to fall upon them suddenly. The work, when successfully accomplished, was called Castle Arnold. Thus, by the grace of God and also because of this fortress, the road became much safer and the journey of pilgrims to or from Jerusalem was rendered less perilous.' William of Tyre, 14, 8, 640. For Frankish pressure on the Ascalonites, see Usama Ibn Munqidh, trans. Hitti, 40–41.

We can conclude therefore by claiming that although the region surrounding Ascalon was the only true frontier region, the supremacy of the Franks in most of the encounters was evident.

During the second stage, the periods of relative calm increased in length and the region of Nablus was attacked only once (or perhaps twice). The first certain attack occurred in 1137, while for the second one, in November 1152, we have only the description left us by William of Tyre who writes that its objective was the Nablus area, but that the raiders also reached the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, were repelled there, and fled to the crossings of the Jordan River.¹⁵

Eastern Lower Galilee and the Beit Shean Valley were other areas that enjoyed relative calm from the 1130s to the 1170s. One of the few attacks on Galilee was mounted by Shams al-Muluk Buri in August 1134. It is described by Ibn al-Qalanisi as a counter-attack in retaliation for one conducted by a huge Frankish army which plundered the Hawran:

Now the Franks had a host of horse and foot so vast that they besieged the Muslims in their camp, and neither horseman nor footsoldier could venture forth without being riddled with arrows and snatched to his death. This archery duel between the two sides had continued for some days, when Shams al-Muluk threw them off their guard and marched out, unperceived by them, with a considerable body of the 'askar, making for their towns of Acre, Nazareth, and Tiberias.¹⁶

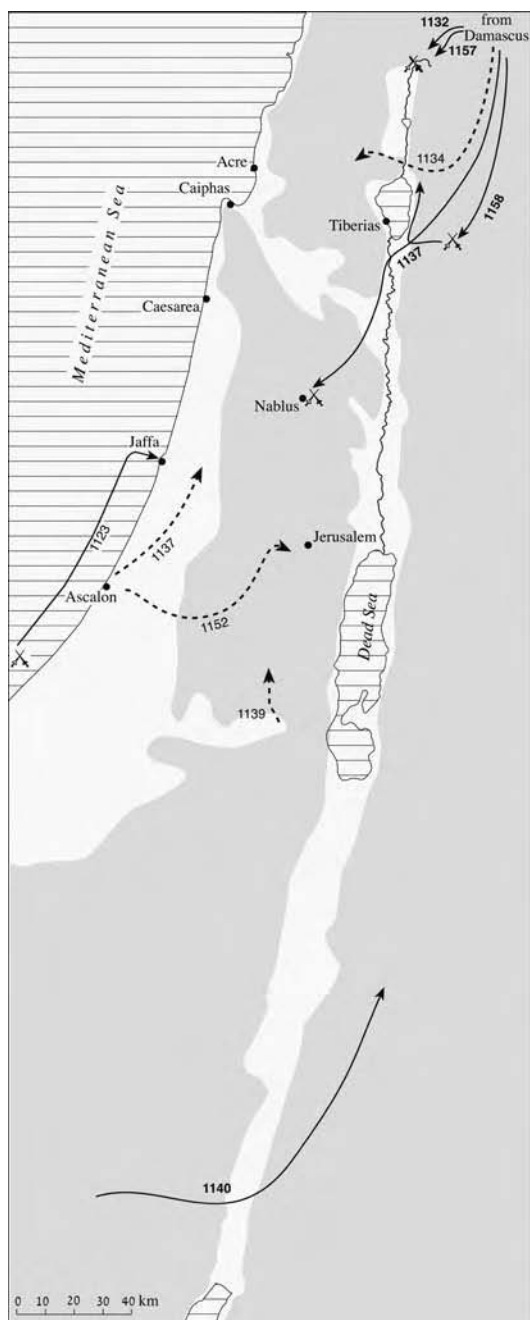
Other regions, such as Trans-Jordan, western Galilee, and the coastal area north of the Yarkon River, were subject to almost no Muslim attacks whatsoever prior to the offensive begun by Salah al-Din at the beginning of the 1180s.¹⁷

The paucity of attacks against the interior of the country, as well as their chronological and geographical dispersion, indicates that between the 1120s (in the north of the country, and most likely in the south as well) and the late 1160s the Latin Kingdom held outstanding military superiority over its potential adversaries to the north, east, and south. It does not seem logical that there were many other attacks which were not recorded in contemporary Arabic and Latin chronicles, since there was no good

¹⁵ For the Damscene attack on Nablus in 1137, see Kedar, 1984, 398–99; Kedar, 1989, 90–91; William of Tyre, 17, 20, 787–89; Grousset, 1939.

¹⁶ See Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 216–18; Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 392–97; the first attack on the Galilee in the late twelfth century was conducted in 1172. See Ibn al-Athir, XI, 352.

¹⁷ A battle in which the Crusaders were defeated and their enemies reached the gates of Acre is described in a letter sent by Patriarch Amalricus to the princes of the West in 1169, Hospital, no. 404, 279–80.



Map 10.3. Muslim attacks on the Latin Kingdom (1115–mid-1160s).

reason for the chroniclers, who paid most of their attention to events of this kind, to avoid describing them. If, then, we relate to the documented descriptions as presenting a true picture, we will observe that sometimes a generation passed between two incursions. During this time the Franks were able to establish a whole network of rural settlements as well as many large centres, both cities and castles. In other words, during a period lasting about fifty years, one in which the defensive and political structure of the Latin Kingdom was shaped, one cannot point to any real military danger or threat to the kingdom. Quite the opposite: this was a period during which Palestine enjoyed a state of relative calm which was undoubtedly much greater than that prevailing before the arrival of the Franks in the Levant.

The Franks, however, did not cease to threaten their Muslim enemies throughout the second stage, accompanying their raids with castle building. Even the construction of the castles of Jazirat Far'un and Shaubak in 1115-16 were the outcome of an armed advance raid into the territory east of the Jordan, ensuring Frankish control over this area until after the Battle of Hattin. Baldwin I even tried to conquer Egypt in 1118, though this campaign came to an end when the king took ill and died near al-ʿArish, putting a temporary halt to the attempt to capture Egypt. In 1123 a Venetian fleet defeated the Fatimid fleet in a great sea battle off the coast of al-ʿArish, a battle which left its mark on Venetian history and was commemorated, many years later, in a painting on the walls of the Great Council Room of the Doges' Palace in Venice. A year later the Franks, again with Venetian support, conquered Tyre.

During the next two decades the Franks time and again attacked the Damascus area and the Golan. In 1126 they set out on a long military campaign along the Hawran that ended south of Damascus. In 1129 they captured the city of Baniyas, while once again trying to attack Damascus. Baniyas was captured again by the Damascenes in 1132, but in 1134 the Franks staged another expedition into the Hawran. The mightiest campaign against Damascus came in 1148, during the Second Crusade. Though the Franks were unable to conquer the city, there is no doubt that superiority in land battles lay at that time with the Crusaders. There were additional Frankish incursions into the Golan in 1157 (besieging and taking the Cave Castle *en route*) and in 1158 (deep into the Hawran, up to Daria).

A comparison of the number of Frankish attacks against Muslims during the second stage (1115-67) with the number of Muslim attacks on the kingdom is most instructive. Though this period was three times

longer than the preceding one, the number of Muslim raids against the interior of the kingdom was one-quarter of those in the earlier period, meaning that the *frequency* of Muslim attacks was twelve times less than during the first stage. The frequency of Frankish military campaigns, on the other hand, increased constantly. Theoretically, at least, these numbers indicate that the security situation in the kingdom had improved in comparison with the first stage. The danger of a threat from across the kingdom's borders can therefore not be the reason for the supposed tendency of the Franks to take up residence behind the walls of fortified cities and castles.

One should not infer from this that the security of local residents and wayfarers was ensured. Even in seemingly peaceful periods, it was never safe to travel the roads and highways of the kingdom.¹⁸ Having said this, it is still possible to maintain that security conditions along the roads were worse during the earlier periods than in the later ones. Documents describing the first stage are replete with mentions of highway robbers and violent nomads who made life and travel relatively difficult in certain regions of the kingdom, such as the southern Hebron hill district, Trans-Jordan, and perhaps also in the lower eastern Galilee. One source, for example, relates the following about the region north of Betgibelin in 1100, in whose caves were 'Saracens who lived in this area . . . with their animals and property . . . among them were those robbers who were wont to regularly hide in ambush between Ramleh and Jerusalem in order to kill our Christians'.¹⁹ Khirbat Qarta (Casale Destreiz) opposite 'Athlit, was another site held by robbers in 1103.²⁰ During the first half of the twelfth century the Hebron hills were the home of many 'pagan' robbers and thieves.²¹

¹⁸ William of Tyre, 12, 7, 554, stresses that the main duty of the newly established Order of the Temple in 1118 was to keep the roads and highways safe from the threats of robbers and to protect the pilgrims: 'Prima autem eorum professio, . . . ut vias et itinera maxime ad salutem peregrinorum contra latronum et incursantium insidias pro viribus conservarent.'

¹⁹ Baldwin relied on the help of native Christians in order to get rid of robbers in 1100. See Albert of Aachen, VII, 39, 533–34; cf. Fulcher of Chartres, II, 37, 373–74.

²⁰ For the attack of robbers (predones et viarum publicarum effractores) on Baldwin I in March 1103, near Districtum (Petra Incisa) see William of Tyre, 10, 25 (26), 485.

²¹ The Russian Abbot Daniel wrote about the Hebron region: 'Awakening in the morning [he spent the night in Teko'a] . . . we went to Bethlehem. The village *mukhtar* himself, armed, guided us to Bethlehem. He also led us to all these holy places [in the Hebron Hills region] and showed them to us, because it is difficult to approach these places directly due to the pagans. There are many pagan Saracens in these hills, and they strike at the Christians', in Khitrowo, 1889.

Some of the dangers faced by travellers emanated from organised groups coming from Ascalon while others resulted from nomadic tribes. According to the testimony of Benincasa, the biographer of Ranieri of Pisa, who made pilgrimage in the late 1130s, the road to Hebron was dangerous because of the attacks of the Ascalonites even after the construction of Betgibelin. A similar testimony, which claims that the castle of Latrun was constructed in 1137 because of the attacks from Ascalon, is another example. We can conclude therefore, that wayfarers continued to be threatened even during the late 1130s despite the construction of the new castles, and even though the kingdom itself was much safer than before.²² The threat of the nomadic tribes had not passed during the fifth decade of the kingdom's existence. Arabic sources relate that the castle of Karak had been built in 1142 because of Bedouin raids on a local Christian monastery and the village bordering on it.²³

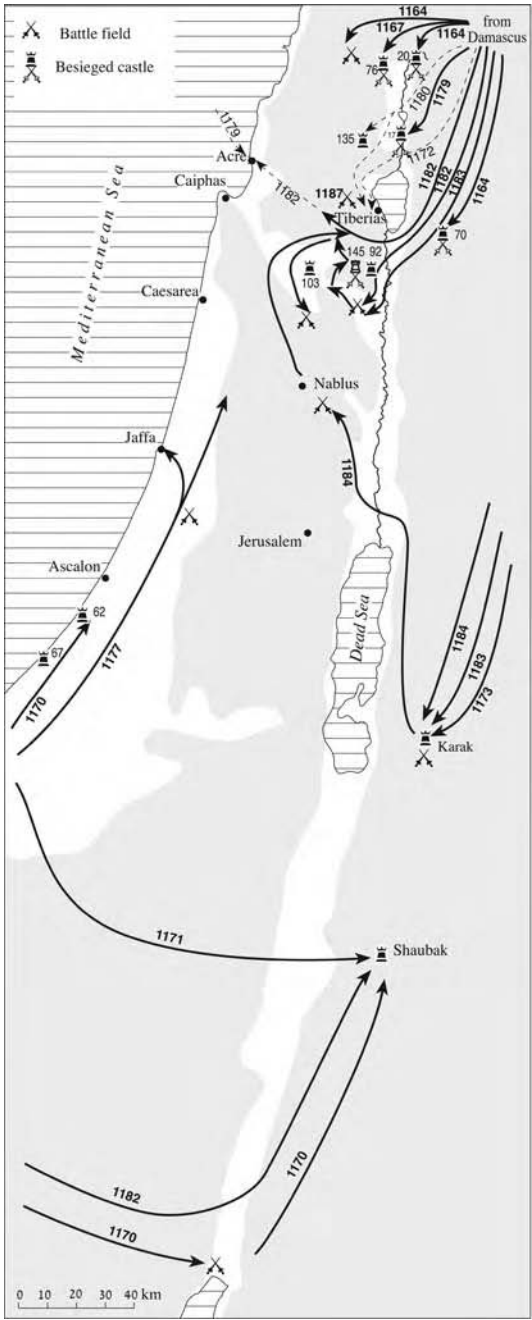
Even such insecurity, which, as noted, was particularly characteristic of the kingdom's earlier decades and its southern frontier, must be viewed against the medieval background, and not judged by means of modern criteria. Security conditions in Frankish Palestine were not appreciably different from those along the roads and in the rural areas of contemporary Europe.

THIRD STAGE, 1168–1187: THE MUSLIM OFFENSIVE AND THE CREATION OF THE FRANKISH FRONTIER

The period of 'incessant pressure' on some of the Frankish settlements, and the creation of a frontier, began only in the late sixties and early seventies of the twelfth century (Map 10.4), with the beginning of the offensive by Nur al-Din and Salah al-Din. Even then the entire kingdom was not under threat and most of the attacks were aimed at its southern (Gaza, Daron, and Eilat) and eastern (Karak and Montreal) fringes. Salah al-Din's first attempt to attack the interior of the kingdom, in 1173, was

²² For an Ascalonite attack on Christians near the Yarkon river in 1106 and for the killing of 500 people during this attack see Albert of Aachen, x, 8, 634–35. For an unsuccessful Ascalonite attack in 1109 which commenced as an attack on the Hebron region and ended in the vicinity of Jerusalem, see x, 31–35, 646–47. For another Ascalonite (?) attack on pilgrims on their way from Jaffa to Jerusalem in 1109, see Fulcher of Chartres, II, 37, 514–18; for an Ascalonite attack in the late 1130s see Kedar, 2003, 83; for an Ascalonite attack being the reason for the construction of the castle of Latrun, see Hiestand, 1994.

²³ Ibn al-Furat, trans. Lyons, no. 61, 50–51, s.a. 661; Qalqashandi, IV, 155; for robbers and highway-men in central Galilee, as late as 1179, see William of Tyre, 25, 21, 997–98.



Map 10.4. Major military confrontations (1168–87).

thwarted. A second attempt ended in his army being routed at the Battle of Montgisard in 1177.²⁴

It is important to note that even during most of this period the Muslims were wary of meeting the Frankish forces face on. They preferred ambushes, or hitting the rearguard of Frankish columns retreating from their own countries, and sometimes tried to take a castle by surprise before the Franks could send reinforcements. In the very few cases in which they instigated large land battles (such as the one at Montgisard in 1177), they were roundly defeated. All this indicates that at least until the early 1170s the Franks did not face any real threat from their external enemies. What Conder wrote during the final years of the nineteenth century is still valid:

The Latins in Syria enjoyed, for nearly a century, an amount of peace and prosperity greater than that of most European lands during the same period, and . . . for many years they were untroubled by war, while for the first sixty years their contests were all on the boundaries of the kingdom.²⁵

Zvi Razi was of the same opinion, in his 1970 work on the Galilee principalities:

In the period between 1120 and 1163 the military superiority of the Kingdom of Jerusalem over its northern neighbours became more and more obvious. And prior to the conquest of Damascus by Nur al-Din they were not divested of this superiority. As a result, most of the conflicts between the Crusaders and the Muslims occurred beyond the borders of the Galilee. The number of Muslim incursions into the Galilee were few and of limited extent, and the inhabitants enjoyed a long and continuous period of peace and security [my translation – R.E.].²⁶

We may sum up, then, and say that during the late 1160s areas along the fringes of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem turned into frontier areas *par excellence*. Life in these regions was less secure than in what one may term 'the heart of the kingdom', and Muslim forces repeatedly set siege to castles that were located nearer to the Muslim centre in Damascus than to the Frankish centres in Jerusalem and Acre. During the half century that

²⁴ For the attack on Gaza and Daron see Abu Shama, 489; William of Tyre, 20, 19, 936–39; for the siege on 'Aqaba, see Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 1, 185; Qalqashandi, vii, 27; for the attack on Montreal in 1172, see William of Tyre, 20, 27, 950–51; for the attack of 1173, which reached the heart of the kingdom, see William of Tyre, 20, 28, 951–52; Even before the battle of Montgisard in 1177, the cities of Lydda and Ramla were attacked and villages 'of our people' were demolished. See William of Tyre, 21, 20 (21), 998–99 and 21, 23 (24), 993. For a comprehensive survey of the sources describing the intensive attacks on the Galilee in the mid-1180s, and for the attack that penetrated into central Samaria, see Lyons and Jackson, 1982, 201–41.

²⁵ Conder, 1897, 161.

²⁶ Razi, 1970, 30; cf. Rheinheimer, 1990, 228–29.

preceded the creation of the 'Frankish frontier', the Franks had succeeded in turning Muslim areas, even those closest to centres of Muslim jurisdiction in Damascus and Egypt, into frontier areas, even posing a threat to Cairo and Damascus themselves. In neither of these periods can we speak of a 'border' which seemingly separated Franks from Muslims, but only of varying degrees of a threat to the border areas belonging to the warring parties. Most of the big battles conducted between Muslims and Franks between the 1120s and the 1160s were waged on Muslim ground and in proximity to centres of Muslim population, and most of them ended in decisive victory for the Franks.

Frankish superiority began to weaken, at least in some areas, during the 1160s and 1170s, yet even then they were able to overcome their enemies in most of the frontal confrontations. The growing frequency of clashes, however, indicates that the Franks' power of deterrence was gradually losing ground, and with it their ability to raid enemy areas and threaten their adversaries' centres of power. On the other hand, the unification of the Muslim countries strengthened their ability to attack the Franks.

The relative proximity of the Muslim centres of power to the heart of the Latin Kingdom enabled the forces of Nur al-Din – and later, those of Salah al-Din – to mount surprise raids on frontier areas, attack castles, and beat a hasty retreat before the arrival of reinforcements from the interior of the kingdom. Castles such as Karak and Shaubak, which hitherto had not been threatened directly, were now forced to contend with repeated sieges. Even though each siege ended as reinforcements drew near, the threat faced by the castles, which in a few cases culminated in the fall of important ones to the Muslims, resulted in a substantive change in the nature of their fortifications. That is the subject of Chapter 11.

The distribution of Frankish castles during the twelfth century

The assumption that the threat to the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem remained unchanged in intensity throughout the kingdom's entire existence and all of its territory in effect limited the study of the Frankish castles in the Levant, turning it into a stereotypic and a-historical discussion. Many scholars preferred to describe the spatial distribution of the castles and their architectural features as a deterministic adaptation of European building styles (or of local ones, depending on which school of thought the scholar adhered to) to specific sites, while ignoring the military challenges faced by the kingdom and the high cost which the construction of castles entailed. A few analyses try to differentiate between the castles either by type of ownership (private lords, as opposed to castles built by the military orders, etc.) or by the landscape in which they were erected (on level ground, on the slope of a hill, atop a mountain, etc.). Thus did the discussion of the development of the Franks' most expensive and most complicated military platform become a narrow exchange of opinions, which almost completely ignored the enemies who were the reason for its establishment.¹

This stereotypical and a-historical approach is also conspicuous in the maps marking the sites of the Crusader castles. Such location maps, which have accompanied research of the Crusades since the beginning of the twelfth century and even earlier, generally place all Crusader castles on one map, treating the entire 'Crusader period' as a single and quasi-uniform period. Such maps often present castles and fortresses which never existed simultaneously as part of one contemporaneous system of

¹ For the relatively rare exceptions see Pringle, 1989 (without reference to the spatial distribution); Ellenblum, 1996; Ehrlich, 2003. For a discussion of castles according to ownership see Kennedy, 1992, 21–61; Fedden and Thomson, 1957; Müller-Wiener, 1966. For a deterministic discussion of the locations of Frankish castles, see Boas, 1999, 91–122. Kennedy is one of the only scholars who refers to Muslim warfare in his discussion of Frankish castles, Kennedy, 1994, 98–119.

fortifications. For example, on almost all of them one can find the city of Baniyas, which fell to the Muslims in 1164, together with the castle of Belvoir, which was first built after 1168, even though these two sites – often described as Crusader castles – never existed as such at one and the same time. In another case, the Muslim castle at Al-Subayba (first built in the late 1220s), Hunin (rebuilt in the late 1170s and destroyed after the battle of Hattin), and the castle of Beaufort are displayed together as Crusader castles with visual contact between them.² Since these three sites never existed simultaneously – and definitely not as ‘Crusader castles’ – there is absolutely no significance to the visual contact which did or did not exist between them at one time or another. It can be maintained that the display of all these together on one map of the ‘Crusader castles’ is a cartographic representation of the assumption that all of them were built as a result of a single set of considerations, and as part of a single framework of fortifications.

Any systematic analysis of the distribution of Frankish fortifications, therefore, should be based on a more systematic chronological and geographical division of the fortified sites. It is important to ascertain which of them already existed during the first period, that of the conquest; which were erected during the second period, and where they were located; and which were built – or rebuilt – during the third period.

FIRST-GENERATION CRUSADER CASTLES (1099–1114)³

At least twenty-nine castles were conquered, built, or settled anew by the Franks during the first fifteen years of their reign (Table II.1 and II.2). It is reasonable to assume that there were other fortified sites about which we have no historical information, or other sites which may have been mentioned in the sources but have escaped my attention. Other ‘castles’ were simply not defined as such, but if we consider those for which we have substantial data as also being representative of the others, it would seem that twenty-one of the fortified sites in which the Franks settled during this fifteen-year period had been in existence before their arrival on the scene, and continued to exist after the conquest.

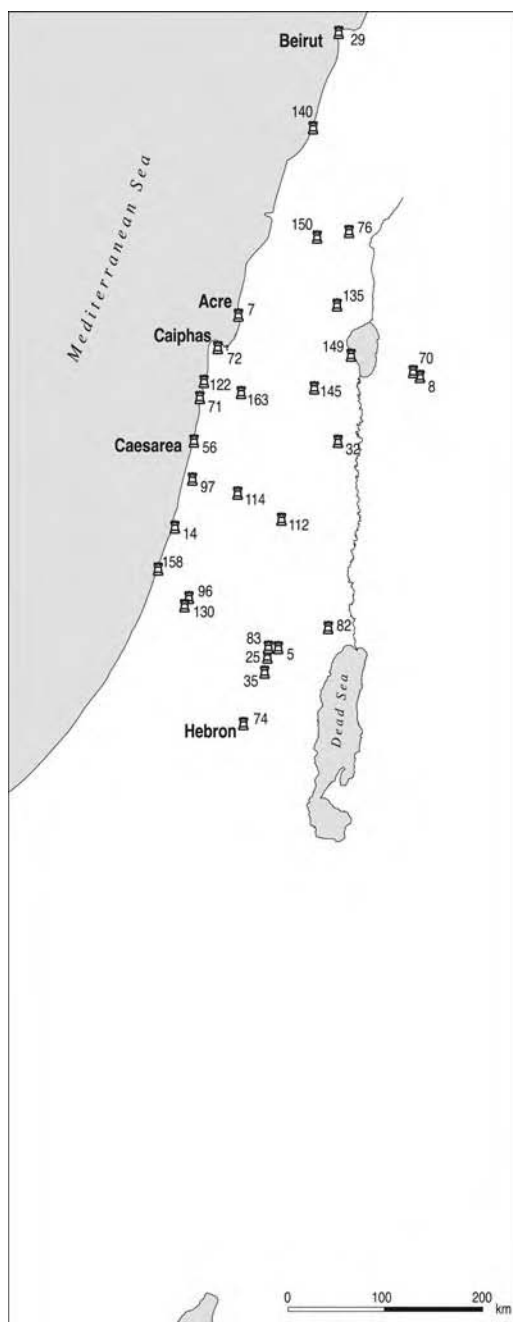
² Müller-Wiener, 1966, 108–9; Fedden and Thomson, 1957, 12 adds Toron, Safad, and Sidon to this chain whereas Benvenisti, 1965, 37, provides us with the complete chain of connections.

³ Castles and cities captured, built, or first mentioned between 1099 and 1114. Dating is based on the first mention of each site. The date of castles which existed prior to the Crusader period is that of their capture. Rebuilt castles are treated as new structures, even if there is an additional date of construction. For detailed historical information, see Appendix.

Table II.1. *Frankish castles which existed during the early Muslim period (638–1099)*

	Name	G. R.	First mentioned as Frankish	Type of settlement
1.	‘Aizariya; Bethany; <i>St Lazarus</i>	174\131	1102	Existing village, fortified monastery
2.	‘Akko	157\258	1104	Existing city
3.	Tell Arshaf Arsuf, <i>Arsur</i>	132\178	1101	Existing city, castle
4.	Beirut <i>Baruth</i>	1130 \217	1110	Existing fortified city
5.	Beit Shean <i>Beisan, Bethsan</i>	197\211	1099	Small castle
6.	Bethlehem	169\123	1106	Existing city, fortified monastery
7.	Caesaria <i>Cesaire</i>	140\212	1110	Existing city
8.	Habonim, Kafr-Lam, <i>Cafarlet</i>	144\227	1213 [first mentioned 8th c.]	Ancient reused castle
9.	Haifa <i>Caiphas</i>	150\246	1099	Existing city; castle and burgus
10.	Hebron <i>St Abraham</i>	160\103	1099	Existing city(?); fortified monastery
11.	Jericho	193\140	1099 (1112)	Existing small city; tower
12.	Jerusalem	170\132	1099	Existing city
13.	Lod <i>Lydda</i>		1102	Existing city, fortified cathedral
14.	Nablus <i>Naples</i>	175\181	(1099)1113–1137	Existing city and refortified citadel
15.	Ramla <i>Rames</i>	138\148	1099	Existing city
16.	Safad <i>Saphet</i>	196\263	1101?	Existing city?
17.	Sidon <i>Saieta</i>	184\330	1110	Existing city
18.	Mt Tabor	187\232	(1099)1106	Monastery
19.	Tiberias	201\243	1099	Existing city
20.	Yaffo Jaffa, <i>Japhe</i>	126\162	1099	Existing city
21.	Tell Yoqne‘am <i>Caymont</i>	160\230	1103	New city and castle

Fourteen of these settlements were large sites which could be termed ‘cities’, even though the infrastructures of some bore no similarity to their glorious past. In some cases these really were large and important cities, such as Jerusalem, Nablus, Caesarea, Arsuf, Beirut, Sidon, Haifa, Tiberias, Ramla, and Jaffa. But in other cases, such as Bethlehem, Beit Shean, Hebron, Jericho, Lydda, and Safad, they were small, sparsely populated settlements, some of which had even been abandoned by their residents prior to the Frankish conquest. In Hebron, for example, there is



Map 11.1. Castles built or conquered during the first period (1099–1114).

Table 11.2. *Castles of the earliest period constructed ex nihilo*

	Name	G. R.	First mentioned as Frankish	Type of settlement
1.	Al-ʿAl	228\236	1106	Small castle
2.	Bayt Safafa <i>Bethafava</i>	169\128	1110	Enclosure
3.	Al Habis, Habis Jaldak <i>Cava de Suet</i>	228\236	1109 and again in 1113; 1118; 1182	Castle
4.	Hunin <i>Castellum Novum</i> <i>Chastel Neuf</i>	201\291	1106	Castle
5.	Madd ad-Dair <i>Mondidier</i>	148\137	1105/23	Towered village
6.	Nairaba Munitio Malue?	159\191	1110–1118	Small castle?
7.	Qarta <i>Casale Destreiz</i>	145\234	1120's	Manor house
8.	Tibnin Toron	188\289	1106–7	Castle

no clear evidence of the establishment of fortifications; only the ancient holy place was fortified, serving as a shelter for the population of the villages in the Hebron area. On Mt Tabor a fortress was built around an older church which apparently was still in use at the time of the Crusader conquest. In several places, such as Nablus, Ramla, Beir Shean, Hebron, and ʿAqaba, the Franks built new fortifications around only part of the area which had previously been fortified.

For this first period, from 1099 to 1114, I have been able to find evidence of the establishment of only eight settlements *ex nihilo*, less than half the number of existing 'cities' which had been rebuilt and resettled by the Franks. It can be assumed that their number was greater because contemporary chronicles and documents tended to concentrate on the 'cities'. If we add to these the castles built in the intermediary period between Mawdud's invasion and the siege of Tyre, we will find that thirteen of the fortified centres of the first generation (accounting for about one-third of those known to us) were new. They included some which did not survive, such as Al-ʿAl, but also other new fortresses and castles which in time became important centres, such as Hunin, Tibnin, and the Cave Castle in the Terre de Suet.

In some places, like Mt Tabor for example, there apparently were no substantial medieval fortifications prior to the Crusader period, and they were now fortified because they were the location of important monasteries or other Christian sites, or because they were in proximity to large, comparatively friendly concentrations of local Christians. It is quite clear that even during the first three decades of the Latin Kingdom the distribution of fortified sites cannot be attributed solely to the intention to defend large urban populations.

Table 11.3. *An intermediary period (1113–1124)*

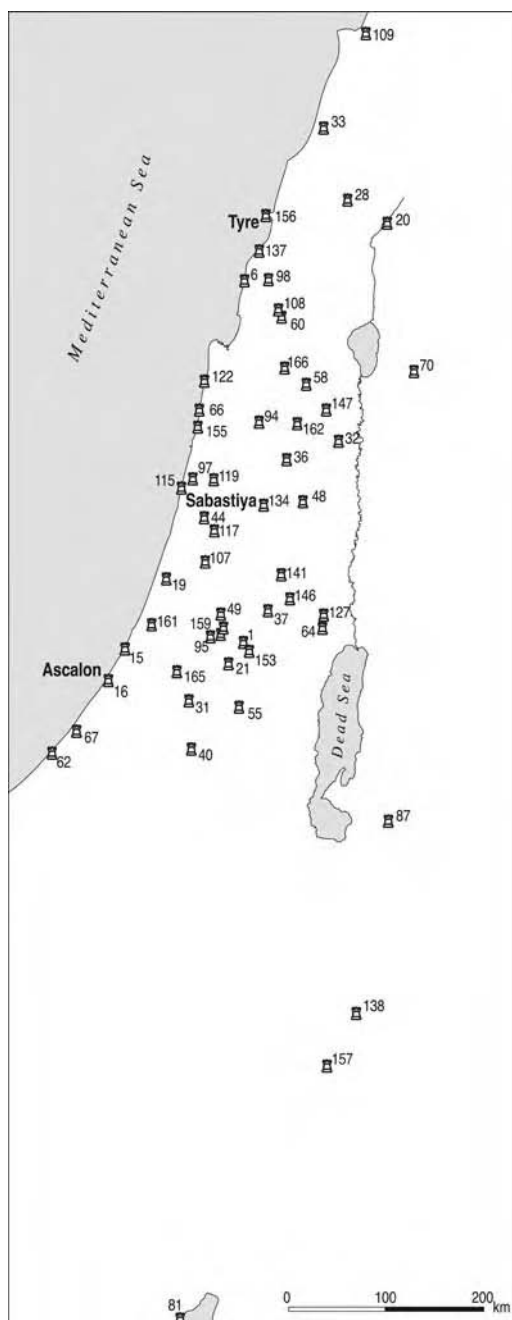
	Name	G. R.	First mentioned as Frankish	Type of settlement
1	Akhziv Casale Imbert	159\272	1123 rebuilt in 1154 (?)	Castle and village
2	Al-Bira <i>Magna Mahomeria</i>	170\146	c. 1124	Frankish village
3	Dayr al-Quruntal <i>Quarantene</i>	190\142	1116	Fortified monastery
4	Jazirat Far'un <i>Aila, Ayla,</i> <i>Elim</i>	150\881	1116–17	Small castle
5	Migdal Afeq, Majdal Yaba, <i>Mirabel</i>	146\165	1122	Castle
6	Qalansuwa <i>Calansue</i>	149\177	1120s (1128)	Castled village
7	Qaqun <i>Caco</i>	149\196	1123	Castle and village
8	<i>Scandalion</i> , Iskandaruna	165\284	1117; again in 1148	Castle and burgus
9	Shaubak, <i>Montreal</i>	203\993	1115; rebuilt in 1142	Castle and burgus
10	Uaiyra <i>Li Vaux Moise,</i> <i>Wadi Musa</i>	194\972	1116 rebuilt in 1144–45	Castle

Note: See Maps 11.1 and 11.2.

We may certainly accept the claim of Pringle and Prawer and agree with them that, at least during the first fifteen years, the Franks tended to settle primarily in the cities and villages which they took from the Muslims. However, Prawer's other assertion, that the Franks tended to settle only in existing cities and had no intention of creating new urban or rural settlements, is challenged by the data presented above. Already during this first period, the Franks established three castles (Safad, Hunin, and Tibnin) which in time became important regional centres, with Safad even developing into an urban, or quasi-urban centre in the thirteenth century.

SECOND-GENERATION CRUSADER CASTLES (1115–1167)

From the middle of the 1110s, and particularly after the failure of Mawdud's invasion in 1113, the Franks engaged in intensive construction of castles (Table 11.3 and 11.4). These were new structures, also mostly built in the rural and remote areas of the country, unlike the earlier constructions, which were erected in the historical, so called urban centres of the country. True, some of the new centres, such as Scandalion and Akhziv, were founded upon earlier infrastructures, while others (Dayr al-Quruntal, Shaubak, Qaqun, and elsewhere) were based upon the existence of Oriental Christian



Map 11.2. Frankish castles of the second generation (1115-67).

monasteries or settlements with a native Christian population, but the tendency to build fortified centres throughout the country, which began after 1113, became more prevalent during the next decades and most of the castles built after the conquest of Tyre in 1124 were established under similar geographical conditions.

A comparison of the spatial diffusion of castles built or conquered during the first period (1099–1114, see Map 11.1) and the second period (1115–67, Map 11.2) with the records of Muslim incursions into the heart of the Latin Kingdom (Muslim incursions of the first period are depicted in Map. 10.1 p. 150 and Muslim incursions of the second period are depicted in Map. 10.3 p. 158) indicates that during the first seven decades of the Latin Kingdom (1099–1167) there was almost no correlation between the location of the castles and areas of military confrontation.

If the accepted theory – that the Franks established their castles for strategic and tactical reasons – is true, we would expect there to be such a correlation. But the maps show the exact opposite to be the case: throughout most of the twelfth century there was a *negative* correlation between the distribution of castles and threats from without the kingdom. Put more plainly, most of the castles were established in sectors of the kingdom which could be described as being ‘relatively secure’, while only a minority of them were located in areas under the threat of enemy attack. The vast majority of castles were built in the southern and northern Sharon Plain or in the royal domains of Acre and Jerusalem, areas which enjoyed peace and quiet for decades. On the other hand, not one castle was built in the Nablus hills, a region that came under attack several times during the twelfth century (1113, 1137, and apparently also in 1152), with the possible exception of a small Crusader fortress in Nablus itself.

And yet, as the kingdom became more firmly established and as it increasingly posed a threat to its enemies, the number of castles also grew. Even more, analysis of the spatial distribution of the Crusader castles indicates that most of them were not established along what would be described by modern scholars as the kingdom’s borders, or in areas to which military and strategic importance could be ascribed. The majority of the castles erected in this period were located in centres of agricultural production, areas under no external threat at all.⁴

Though all Frankish castles built during the second period were planned to withstand enemy attack, it is difficult to link their very

⁴ From the conquest of Tyre to the fall of Hunin, including cities, fortified sites (*arx*, *castrum*, *castellum*), and large castles whose architectural dimensions are not known. See also Appendix 1.

Table 11.4. *Crusader castles of the second generation (1124 and 1167)^a*

1	Abu-Gosh Castellum	160\134	1141	Rural burgus
	Emaus <i>Emaus Fontenoid</i>			
2	Ashdod-Yam Castellum	114\132	1153	Small castle
	<i>Beroart</i>			
3	Ashqelon <i>Ascalon</i>	177\180	1153; 1192	Fortified city
4	Azor, <i>Casel des Plains</i>	131\159	1131–48	Village with a fortification
5	Baniyas <i>Belinas</i>	215\294	1129; 1139, 1157	Fortified city
6	Bayt 'Itab <i>Bethaatap</i>	155\126	1161	Fortified enclosure
7	Beaufort	200\303	1139; 1240; 1260	Castle
8	Beit Guvrin Bayt Jibrin,	140\112	1136?	Castle and adjacent burgus
	<i>Bethgibelin</i>			
9	Beit Shean Beisan, <i>Bethsan</i>	197\211	1183	Castle and a township
10	Belhacem	1120\181	1128	Castle
11	Bil'ama Castellum	177\205	1156	Castle and a burgus?
	<i>Beleismum Chastiau</i>			
	<i>St Job</i>			
12	Al-Burj [<i>Castrum ficuum</i>]	141\095		Fortified enclosure
13	Burj al-Ahmar, <i>Le Tour</i>	146\182	1123–50	Small castle
	<i>rouge</i>			
14	Burj al-Far'ah,	183\188		Fortified enclosure
15	Burj al-Habis, Qal'at	152\145	1136	Small castle
	al-Tantura, <i>Gith</i>			
16	Burj as-Sur, Bethsura	159\110	1136	Fortified enclosure
17	Dabburiya, <i>Buria</i>	185\233	<1101; 1182	Small castle
18	Dayr al-Asad <i>St George de</i>	175\259	1161–79	Fortified monastery
	<i>Lebaene</i>			and a burgus
19	Dayr al-Balah, <i>Darum</i>	088\092	1163 & 1170	Castle
	<i>Darom</i>			
20	Dor, Tantura, <i>Merle</i>	142\224		Fortified enclosure
21	Gaza, <i>Gadres</i>	199\101	1150, 1170?	Castle and a burgus
22	Habis Jaldak, al-Habis,	228\236	1109;	Castle
	<i>Cava de Suet</i>			
23	Karak, <i>Crac</i>	216\066	1142; 1168	Castle and a burgus
24	Lajjun Legio	160\220		Village
25	Latrun Le Toron des	148\137	1137–41	Castle
	Chevaliers			
26	Ma'abarot, Madd ad-Dayr,	141\196	1158	Unknown
	<i>Montididier</i>			
27	Manot, al-Manawat,	164\271	<1169	Fortified enclosure
	Manueth			
28	Mi'iliya, <i>Castellum Regis</i>	174\260	1160	Castle and a burgus
29	Mons Glavianus	1137\217	1125	Castle
30	An-Nabi-Samwil, <i>Mons</i>	157\137	1150s; 1155; 1157	Fortified monastery
	<i>Gaudii</i>			
31	Netaniya Umm Khalid,	137\193	1135	Fortified enclosure
	<i>Castellum Rogerii</i>			
	<i>Longobardi</i>			

Table 11.4. (*cont.*)

32	Qarta, <i>Casale Destreiz</i>	145\234	1112; 1120s	Fortified enclosure and manor house
33	Quruntal Templar Castle	191\143		Fortified monastery
34	Sabastiya, <i>Sebaste</i>	168\186	1128–45	Monastery and burgus
35	Sinjl St. Egidius	175\160	1150	Village
36	At-Taiyba Effraon, Castrum Sancti Helie	178\151	<1156	Small castle and burgus
37	At-Taiyba Forbelet	192\223	1182	Fortified enclosure
38	Tsova Suba, Belmont	162\132	1150s; 1169	Castle
39	Turris Salinarium, Burj al-Malih	141\216	1168	Unknown
40	Tyre <i>Tyr</i>	168\297	1124	Fortified city
41	Yalu <i>Chastel Hernaut</i>	152\138	1132–33	Castle
42	Yavne, Ibelin	126\141	1141	Castle and Burgus
43	Yizre'el, Zir'in, Petit Gerin, Zarin	181\218	?? 1170s	Fortified enclosure
44	Zafit, As-Safi, <i>Blanchegarde</i>	135\123	1142	Castle and burgus
45	Zippori Le Saforie	176\239		Fortified enclosure

Note: See Map 11.2.

existence to the defence of borders or even to defence against external enemies, and it is certainly impossible to rely on a defence-oriented hypothesis to explain their location or specific time of construction. Most of them were actually erected at a time when the frequency of external invasions had greatly decreased and when the future of the kingdom was considered to be secured. Consequently, if the construction of castles has anything to do with the security of the kingdom, it points to Frankish military superiority, not inferiority. We may therefore assume that most of these castles were built, like their counterparts in Europe, to serve as nuclei around which settlement would develop, or as seigniorial administrative centres, and not as a defensive measure against external attack.

As noted in Chapter 7, it is easier to consider the Crusader castles, especially those built during the second period, more as central places of the Frankish settlement than strategic outposts on its borders. The majority of centres of this type were established during times of relative tranquillity which characterised at least half of the twelfth century: from the middle of the 1110s until the late 1160s. During these years of relative calm, more castles were built than in the first and third periods, which were marked by a state of insecurity.

It should be noted, however, that the commonly accepted theory – that the castles built during the first two periods were erected in order to

defend the kingdom from Muslim attack – does not rest solely on anachronistic interpretations by modern-day historians but also on what was explicitly written by William of Tyre, the most important chronicler of the Frankish period, and by other chroniclers of the period, as well as on the accounts of pilgrims who depict a similar situation.⁵ William clearly asserted that the castles built in the south-west of the kingdom were intended as a defence against attacks by the Ascalonites and similar reasons were raised to explain the construction of Latrun.⁶

There is no good reason not to accept these testimonies although some of what William himself writes seems to contradict these claims. For example, when he describes the taking of Ascalon in 1153 he notes that the *residents of Ascalon* had not worked their fields for fifty years, i.e., from the beginning of the twelfth century. Out of fear of Frankish hostilities, the fields around Ascalon had lain uncultivated. However, once it was again possible to engage in agriculture, they produced a sixty-fold crop.⁷ What can be inferred from William's description is that it was precisely the Franks who threatened the Ascalonites, and not the opposite. There was a need, says William, to pay salaries to the inhabitants of Ascalon, and 'even the youngest babes received pay from the treasury of the caliph of Egypt . . . At great expense, therefore, they furnished the city with everything needed and at regular intervals sent arms, food, and fresh troops, for while the Christians were occupied with Ascalon the Egyptians felt less anxiety over our dreaded strength.'⁸

Elsewhere, William writes that the threat to the northern Frankish principalities had already come to an end during the early 1140s: 'From the first coming of the Latins *even to the fortieth year* of the kingdom the Christians were never free from that pest [my emphasis – R.E.].' In other words, even according to William of Tyre, the Muslim threat did not continue throughout the kingdom's entire existence; in fact, it ceased after less than forty years.⁹

We can conclude, therefore, that although there was probably a security reason for the construction of the castles, or at least castle building was considered to answer security needs, the perception of the threat

⁵ Kedar, 2003, 83.

⁶ William of Tyre, 14, 22, 659–60; 15, 21, 306–7; 15, 25, 707–8 and 14, 8, 640. Hiestand, 1994.

⁷ William of Tyre, 18, 1, 810.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 17, 22, 792.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 11, 16, 520: 'A primo enim Latinorum introitu usque *ad annum regni eorum quasi quadragesimum* non defuit nostris pestis illa, seivior ydra, recens et dampno capitum facta locupletior'.

diminished considerably during the 1130s and many of the castles were built in a period that was perceived as more secure.

Similar difficulties are also found in the contemporary writing of European chroniclers: Monique Bourin-Derruau has even noted that such notions were a universal phenomenon and that many sources unjustifiably tended to attribute the erection of castles to external threats:

Ecclesiastical sources, as well as . . . chronicles and documents . . . repeatedly refer . . . to [an alleged] danger of a Muslim invasion. This claim has long ago been refuted by Toubert . . . Poly . . . and Magnou-Nortier . . . All of them pointed to the *topos* which repeats itself and calls for a re-evaluation of the [historical] facts. It was not external danger which caused the flourishing of these castles; quite the opposite is true: the process of fortification in Provence began only when [the Muslim colony of] Fraxinetum disappeared.¹⁰

It is now commonly accepted that the intensive process of European fortification which accompanied the settlement in the tenth to twelfth centuries was not a result of any external or internal threat. Many new fortresses served as symbols of government and administration, attracting new settlers, more than as a solution for acute security needs, while many others were built near temporary markets and regional economic centres. Toubert, in his pioneer study of Latium, called the entire process of establishing new agricultural settlements together with overlooking castles '*incastellamento*', a term that has since become common in the study of European settlement and can also definitely be applied to the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. The intensive construction of castles did not necessarily stem from the state of 'insecurity', and it is difficult to separate the construction of castles from the establishment of rural *burgi*. Both were actually built after security and economic conditions had improved. The flourishing of the rural and fortified settlements in the twelfth century is almost universally considered to be an outcome of economic prosperity and of the existence of a growing layer of small 'entrepreneurs' wishing to take advantage of a burgeoning economy. The granting of economic and legal rights attracted these entrepreneurs to the settlement nuclei, themselves established in part by bigger 'entrepreneurs' precisely for this purpose.¹¹ The fact that the process of *incastellamento* was not

¹⁰ Bourin-Derruau, 1987, I, 87.

¹¹ It is commonly accepted that larger villages began to reappear in Europe during the ninth or tenth centuries, with a few earlier instances in the eighth century. For settlement in England, for example, see Hubert, 2000, 583–99; Marazzi, 1995, 187–98; Astill, 1988, 36–61; Grigg, 1980; Hooke 1985; 1988; Taylor, 1987; Bourin-Derruau, 1987, about Languedoc; Magnou-Nortier, 1974 about Narbonne; Bonnassie, 1975–76 about Catalogne; Toubert, 1973 about Latium; Poteur, 1988.

unique to the Levant makes it difficult to accept the claim that the Franks, whether for their own comfort or due to security reasons, preferred living in concentrated or 'urban' types of settlement to residing in isolated 'rural' hamlets.

THIRD-GENERATION CRUSADER CASTLES (1168–1187)

In the early 1160s, while the Franks were engaged in attacking Egypt, Nur al-Din began his offensive, and the balance of power between the Latin Kingdom and its neighbours began to change. By mid-decade, Nur al-Din had succeeded in taking important Frankish centres: at first it was the city of Baniyas which fell in October 1164, and in summer 1167 he took and destroyed the castle of Hunin, and the Cave Castle of the Gilead.¹²

Simultaneously with the increased frequency of external attacks, some of the Frankish castles gained more importance and began to fill a different role. The castles which were erected, rebuilt, or renovated during this process were located in the newly created 'frontiers' or endangered regions to the east, north-east, and south-west of the kingdom (see Map 11.3).

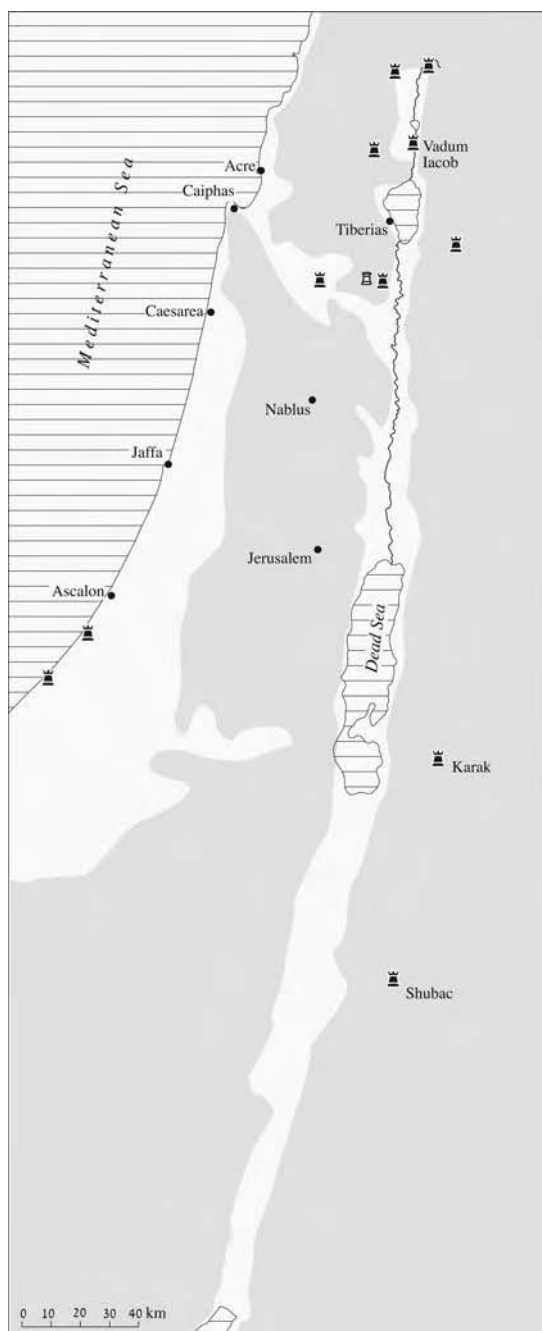
According to Jacques of Vitry, the fortresses of Safad, Belvoir, Montreal, and Karak were constructed and massively fortified after the failure of the Egyptian campaign. He writes that 'after our men failed to conquer the Egyptian cities of Alexandria, Cairo, Damietta, and other cities along the Mediterranean coast, they turned *to the end of their own country* [my emphasis – R.E.] in order to protect their own territory, and to that purpose constructed 'castra munitissima et inexpugnabilia inter ipsos et hostes extruxerunt. . .'¹³

Jacques of Vitry was apparently mistaken in dating the construction of these castles. Karak was built and fortified as the central Frankish stronghold in Trans-Jordan as early as 1142,¹⁴ and Safad is already mentioned at

¹² Baha al-Din, ed. *RHC*, III, 43; Abu Shama, ed. *RHC*, IV, 111; Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, IIA, 551; *Histoire d'Alep de Kameladdin*, ed. E. Blochet, *ROL*, III, 543.

¹³ 'Cum igitur civitates memoratas (Alexandria, Cayrum, Damiata) pluresque alias, maxime mediterraneas nostri subiugare non possent, in extremitatibus terrae suae ut fines suos defenderent, castra munitissima et inexpugnabilia inter ipsos et hostes extruxerunt; scilicet Montem Regalem, et Petram deserti, cuius nomen modernum est Crac, ultra Iordanem; Sapheth et Belvoir, cum multis aliis munitionibus, citra Iordane. Est autem Sapheth castrum munitissimum inter Accon et mare Galilae, non longe a montibus Gelboe situm, Belvoir vero, non longe a monte Thabor iuxta civitatem quondam egregiam et populosam Iezrael, inter Citopolim et Tyberiadem, situm est in loco sublimi.' Jacques of Vitry, *Cap.* 48, 1074.

¹⁴ See William of Tyre, 15, 21, 703–4.



Map 11.3. Frankish castles of the third generation (1168–87).

the beginning of the century¹⁵ and again by William of Tyre in 1157.¹⁶ Montreal too was erected in the second decade of the twelfth century.¹⁷ Jacques of Vitry was undoubtedly aware that some of the fortresses were already in existence prior to 1168, since in another chapter of his book he expressly notes the existence of Montreal in 1118.¹⁸ Despite this, he writes that all of these were built in 1168, after Amalric's campaign in Egypt. Yet Jacques may not have been entirely mistaken, for his testimony is corroborated by other sources as well. Theoderich, who was the first to mention the castles of Belvoir and La Fève as existing entities during his visit in 1172, specifically notes that Belvoir was built to defend the kingdom against the assaults of Nur al-Din and that Safad was constructed to check the incursions of the Turks.¹⁹

Another independent testimony, which lends support to Jacques of Vitry's claim, is the fact that the king of Jerusalem acquired Safad in 1168 and gave it to the Templars, while the Hospitallers acquired the region of Belvoir in that same year and built the fortress there within no more

¹⁵ It would appear that at the beginning of the twelfth century Safad was no more than a 'tower' which had already been erected in the early Muslim period. Ibn Shaddad, A'laq, 146, writes: 'It [Safad] was at the beginning a hill [*tel*] and on the hill was a flourishing village beneath Burj al-Yatim. It was in the hands of the Muslims until the Franks captured it after they occupied Syria, in the year 495/1101–12. The Templars built it.' He adds that 'nothing is mentioned about it in the early Islamic history books'. Cf. Ibn al-Furat, trans. Lyons, I, 112; II, 88. Van-Berchem, 1902, 413–15, was aware of the fact that the fortress could not have been in the hands of the Templars at the beginning of the twelfth century. Ibn Shaddad, he said, who wrote his book at the end of the 1280s and was still under the influence of the slaughter of the Templars, thought that it had already been constructed by them at the beginning of the twelfth century. The site is also mentioned in Röhrich, *Regesta*, no. 39, 1103 as Turon Saphet and not as a fortress: 'castrum cui Saphet nomen, quod in eodem monte situm'. See also William of Tyre, I, 14, 830.

¹⁶ In the course of the twelfth century a *burgus* was apparently established there, as William of Tyre, I, 14, 830, calls it 'Castrum Saphet' or 'Sephet' in 1157. In 1168 Amalric I bought the castrum of Safad from Fulco, the constable of Tiberias, and transferred it to the Templars, Röhrich, *Regesta*, no. 447, 1168, and during the same year the fortress of Safad, regarded as 'the limit of the country,' was reinforced and transferred to the Templars. Cf. also Yaqūt, Mu'jam, III, 399; al-'Umari, 134 and al-Uthmani, ed. B. Lewis, *BSOAS*, 15 (1954): 480; Favreau-Lilie, 1980, pp. 67–87.

¹⁷ See Mayer, 1990, 38–49.

¹⁸ Jacques of Vitry, cap. xxviii, p. 1068: 'Cum autem rex [Balduinus] fines regni sui ex parte Occidentali praedicto modo dilasset cupiens ad Orientem trans Jordanem regnum Christianorum ampliare, in terra Arabia, quia Syria Sobol nuncupatur, in colle sublimi castrum fundavit munitissimum, cui nomen imposuit Mons Regalis eo quod Rege fundatum.' Marino Sanuto, who apparently copied from Jacques of Vitry, ascribes the construction of the fortresses to King Fulque of Anjou, Marino Sanuto, Lib. III, pars vi, cap. xviii, 166.

¹⁹ 'In cuius vicino [Bethsan] monte precelso hospitarii fortissimum et amplissimum castrum constituerunt, ut adversus Noradini Halapiensis tyranni insidias terram citra Jordanem sitam possint tueri. Est et ibi iuxta ad occidentem quoddam castrum Templariorum vocabulo Sapham, adversus Turcorum incursiones valde munitum.' *Peregrinatores Tres*, 189; for the history of Belvoir see Ben Dov, 1975; Biller, 1989.

than four years.²⁰ Jacques of Vitry combined the construction of Belvoir with the substantive strengthening of Safad, claiming that both castles, together with the fortresses at Karak and Montreal, were built anew. Theoderich also mentions Belvoir and Safad together, although the two are not at all close to each other. It is therefore possible to assume that all of these castles underwent a phase of thorough refortification at about the same time.

It seems that other fortresses which were first mentioned at the beginning of the 1170s could be included in this phase of fortification or refortification. Such were the castles of La Fève, the Templar castles on the Jordan River, and Maldoim (*Cisterna Rubea cum ecclesia*) which were also mentioned by Theoderich for the first time during these years.²¹ Dayr al-Balah, or Daron, a southern fortress on the highway to Egypt, was also constructed anew at the end of the 1160s. At first only a small fortress was built, a stone's throw from one wall to the other. But later, apparently in the early 1170s, a proper fortress was constructed. During the crusade of Richard the Lionheart at the beginning of the 1190s, reference is made to a fortress already surrounded by seventeen towers.²²

Ten years after the rebuilding of Belvoir, Safad, Karak, and Montreal the Franks fortified Hunin anew, while at the same time they built the fortress of Vadum Iacob (Jacob's Fords).²³ The construction of all these fortresses can be related to the same phase of castle building, although the effort which the Franks invested in the construction of the last two can point to the nature of the evolving frontier. In 1179 the Franks were forced to mobilise the kingdom's army to protect building operations and the king himself had to transfer his residence for several months to the construction site.²⁴

The descriptions of both Theoderich and Jacques of Vitry strengthen my argument that the castles built after 1168 were erected along newly created frontiers. Jacques of Vitry's reference 'to the end of their own country' and Theoderich's to the incursions of Nur al-Din are supported by the map which shows the spatial distribution of the castles built, first mentioned, or reconstructed between 1168 and 1187 (Map 11.3).

²⁰ Strehlke, no. 4, April, 1168, 5. Hospital, no. 398, 1, 271–72.

²¹ *Peregrinatores Tres*, 189 (lines, 1415–19); 177 (lines, 1075–76) 175 (lines, 1001–4 and 1019–23).

²² Compare William of Tyre, 20, 19, 936–37 with *Gesta Regis Ricardi*, xxxviii.1, 280 and 318–19.

²³ William of Tyre, 21, 26 (27), 998–99. See Ellenblum, 2003.

²⁴ William of Tyre, 21, 25 (26), 997–98; 21, 29 (30), 1003–4.

Jacques de Vitry's narrative is reminiscent of William of Tyre's claims in regard to the castles which faced Ascalon. As mentioned, William put their construction down to security reasons and attributed Ascalon's decline in strength to their existence. It seems to me that it would not be imprudent to separate the facts recorded by William of Tyre from his historical interpretation and maintain that his interpretation was more in line with conditions from the 1170s onwards and with respect to castles intended to defend the kingdom against Nur al-Din than with the fortifications ostensibly constructed to protect the kingdom against Ascalon, which at the time did not constitute any real threat. My conclusion is consistent with Smail's assertion: 'The castles of southern Palestine were not . . . established for general purposes of frontier defence. During the period of their construction the political state of Egypt was such that there was no danger of the Fatimids renewing their earlier invasions.'²⁵

The fortresses in the south-west that were built in the 1130s and 1140s were in no way similar to the new, much bigger castles of the third generation, and they could hardly have been outposts for garrisons (for a comparative chart see Map 11.3 and Figure 11.2). The castles of the third generation were larger and better fortified than was usual during the earlier stages. The fortress at Castellum Regis (Mi'ilya), first mentioned in 1160, less than ten years before the construction of Belvoir and Safad, is one-quarter the size and much simpler than Belvoir and other castles of the later period.

Therefore, the castles of the third generation called for a great outlay of funds, both for construction and fortification and for their upkeep once construction had been completed. This massive investment justified itself after the Battle of Hattin. Belvoir, Safad, Hunin, Karak, and Montreal were the last Frankish outposts to hold out despite the sieges mounted against them by Salah al-Din. None of them fell immediately to the Muslim forces like the fortresses and castles of the earlier generations, and some of them even survived – isolated in an area under enemy control – for another year and a half or more.

* * *

It is now time to sum up Part III. At its outset I claimed that the research literature does not clearly define even the most basic terms, such as 'Crusader city', 'Crusader village', and 'Crusader castle', and that whatever definition is provided is at best based upon an undefined scholarly

²⁵ Smail, 1956, 211–13.

consensus. Even a full list of settlements which could be classed as castles or fortresses was never drawn up, and we had to turn to the primary sources to create it. Furthermore, as hard as it is to define a 'Crusader castle', it is more difficult to differentiate between 'Crusader cities' and 'large villages' of the Crusader period. It is even more difficult to compare their size, since no scholar has attempted to reproduce plans of various castles on the same scale.

In my interpretation, I related the element of 'fortification' not as being characteristic of one type of settlement, which for that reason could be called a 'castle' or a 'fortress', but as a basic form of construction stemming from the medieval way of life and therefore common to all types of medieval settlements. Just as the residents of the cities and castles, like their counterparts in the villages, engaged in agriculture, and just as one can find burgesses in the city, the village, and also in the castle, so there were fortifications and churches in all three types of settlements. The latter two gradually became symbols *par excellence* of medieval life because they reflected the social and political milieu which created them, but there is no reason to classify a settlement by the fact that it had some type of fortifications, just as it is useless to characterise a settlement by the existence of a church, or by the fact that its residents engaged in agriculture.

It is possible, however, to classify a settlement on the basis of the *size* of its church and its *importance* in the ecclesiastical framework, or by the size of the settlement and its importance in the economic, social, or security structures of the area. In other words, a settlement can be defined by the importance of the services it provides to its environs. There were settlements big enough to warrant being called 'cities'; there were other central settlements large enough to warrant the term 'castles'; and, on the lowest rung of the hierarchical ladder, there were villages in need of services provided by the larger settlements, services whose threshold was too high to justify their being found in the very smallest settlements.

This approach, which defines the character of a settlement by its position in the spectrum of settlements, necessitates analysis of the wider context, for it is impossible to position the settlement within the hierarchy without first defining that hierarchy itself. As a result, it is no longer possible to relate to all castles built during the Crusader period as settlements created during the same framework of time and space.

The spatial diffusion of centres, also called castles, is more enlightening about the Frankish lifestyle than is the attempt (which has, until the present, only ended in failure) to precisely define a 'medieval city' or a 'medieval castle'. The growth of centres of a certain type, or exceptional

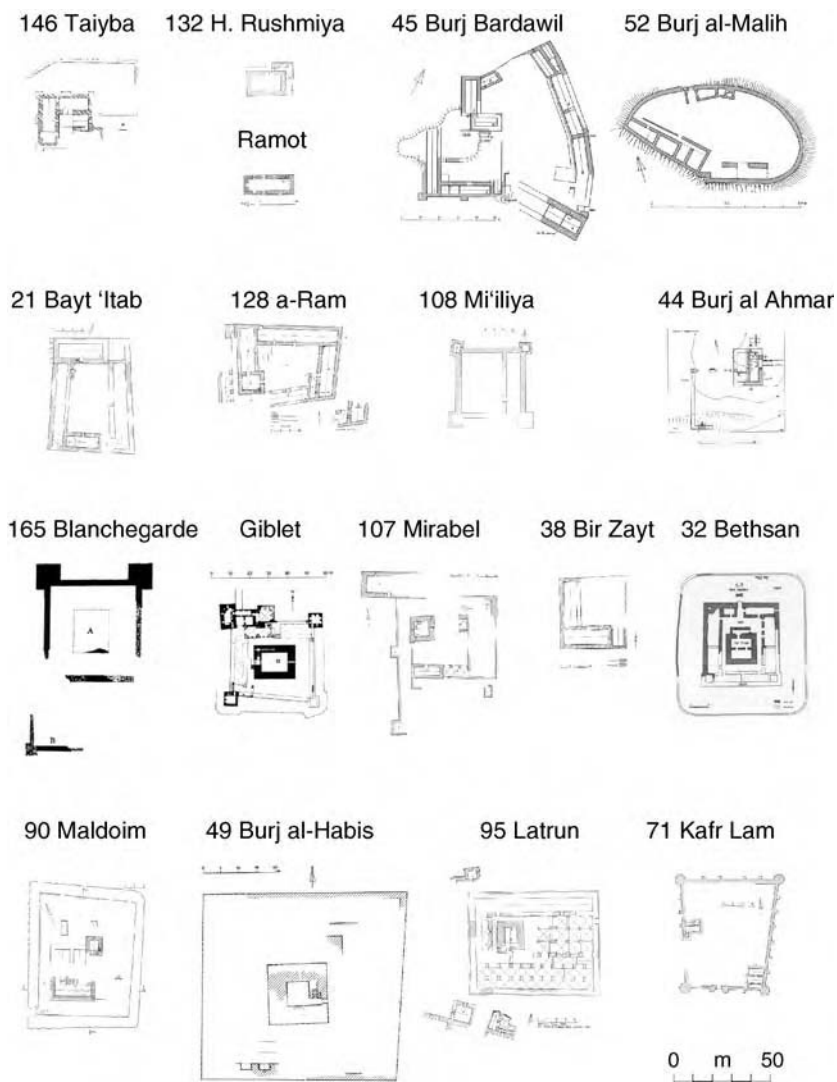


Figure 11.1. A comparative chart of the Frankish castles drawn on the same scale: castles and farmhouses of the first and second generations.

efforts to develop them, are facts which may be important in the effort to analyse the structure of Frankish settlement in the Levant.

From the standpoint of security, the history of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in the twelfth century may be divided into three periods of

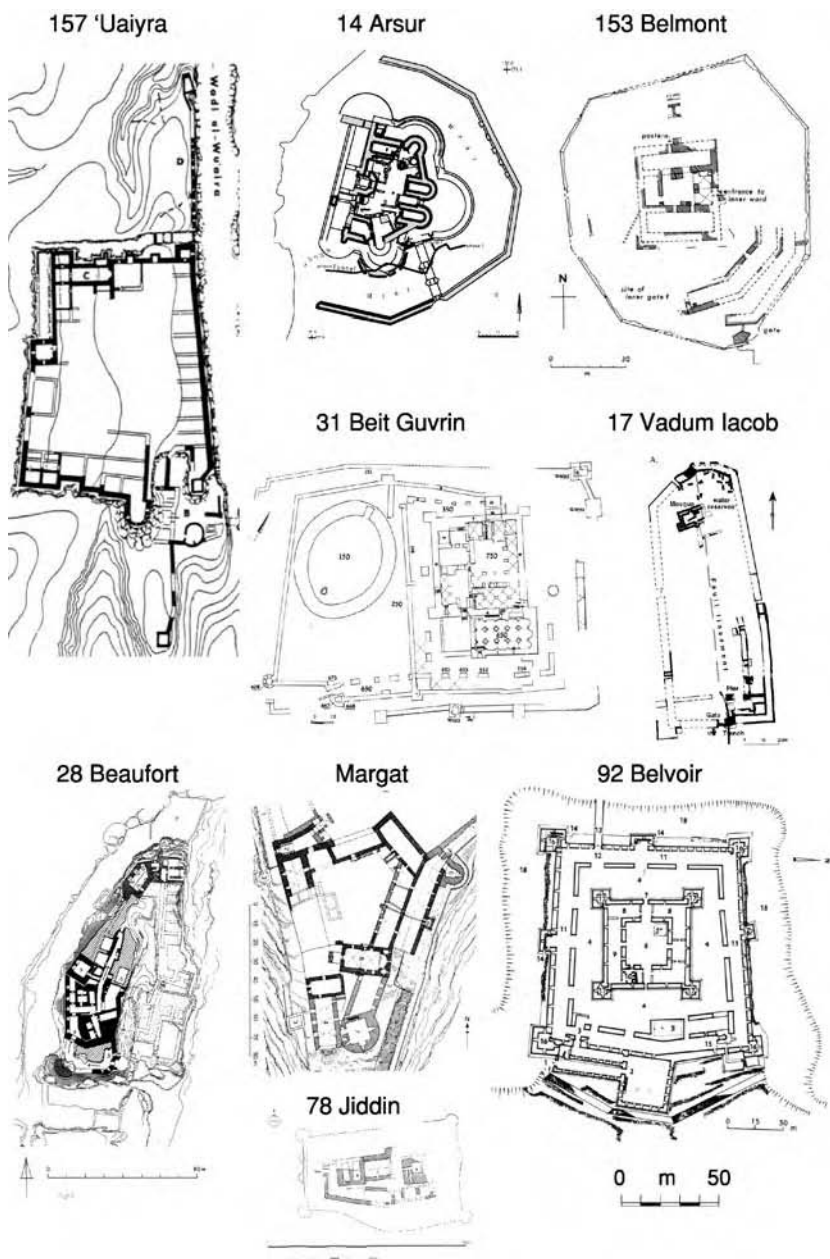


Figure 11.2. A comparative chart of the Frankish castles drawn on the same scale: castles and farmhouses of the third generation.

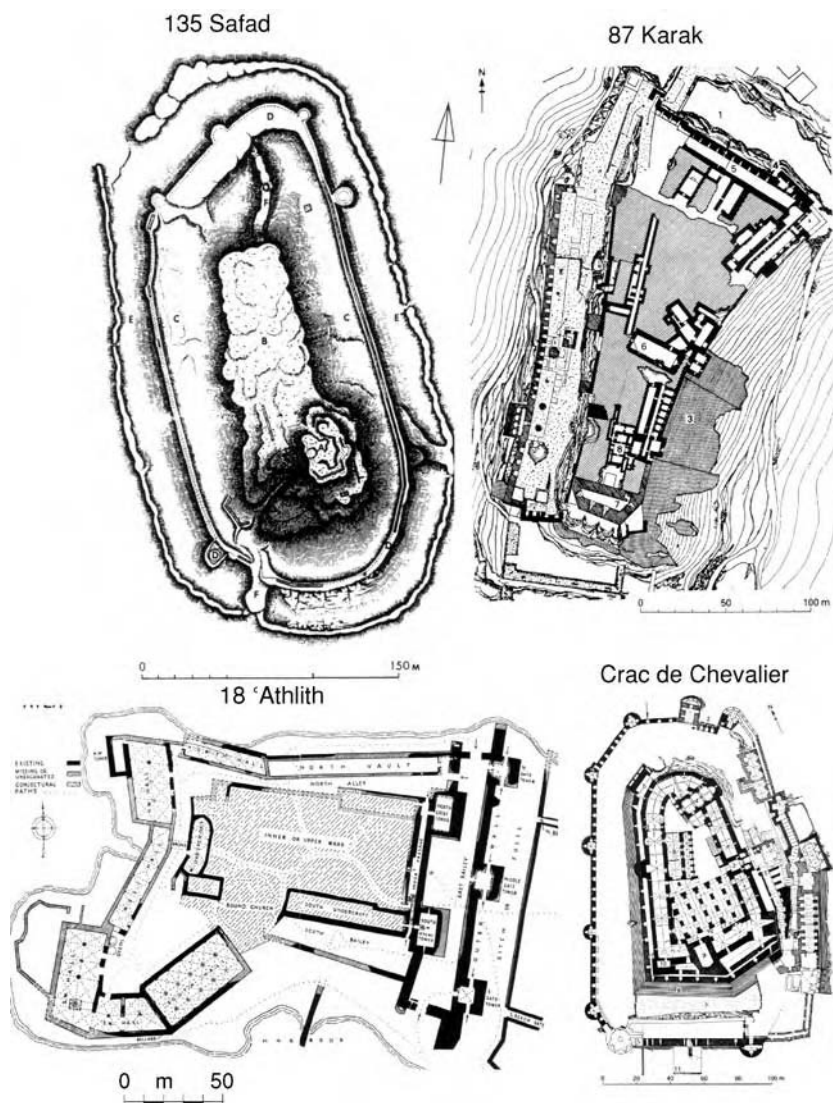


Figure 11.3. A comparative chart of the Frankish castles drawn on the same scale: castles of the thirteenth century

varying lengths. In the first – the period of conquest and establishment of the kingdom – the Franks, constantly endangered by and numerically inferior to their enemies, took over central sites captured from the Muslims, turning them into their own castles. During the second period, the Franks were militarily superior to their enemies in the north and south. The immigration of new Latin settlers changed the demographic map of the country, while the new castles erected during this time reflected improved security conditions as well as the new geographical needs of the Franks and their local Christian allies. In the third period, Frankish military superiority began to decline while Muslim forces began to threaten the fringes of the kingdom and, in time, to endanger its very existence. It was during this period that the Franks built new huge castles which incorporated innovative military technologies.

To understand why the Franks had to invest such great efforts in fortification and what military challenges they had to meet, we shall turn to a minute analysis of the siege tactics employed by both the Muslims and the Franks during the twelfth century.

PART IV

*The castle as dialogue between siege tactics and
defence strategy*

Siege and defence of castles during the First Crusade

From a military point of view, one can relate to the castle – any castle – as a complex and expensive technological development intended to withstand attack and to ward off enemy attempts to capture or mount a siege against it. Castle architecture, like all other improvements in military technology, was influenced and shaped by a constant tactical and strategic dialogue between opposing forces. When one side developed a new and successful siege tactic, the opponent countered with a new strategy of fortification that took the edge off the enemy's innovation. This in turn led the attacker to come up with a new strategy for besieging the castle, and the cycle was repeated.

This phenomenon led Hugh Kennedy to write: 'The development of castle architecture must be seen as the result of continuing dialectic between attack and defence which gave the advantage sometimes to one, sometimes to the other. Only by examining techniques of attack can we come to a real understanding of the architecture of defence.'¹ In other words, Frankish military architecture reflected not only the construction methods with which the Franks were familiar, but also Muslim tactics of siege and warfare, as well as the financial ability of the owners of these strongholds. And yet, even in his brilliant and innovative analysis of the strategic dialectic between the Frankish castle and Muslim siege tactics, Kennedy hardly refers to the gradual development of this very dialogue over time and space. He adopts a generalised approach to the common siege techniques and defence tactics, providing examples for every type of warfare and all types of fortifications, but the exact cause and effect relationship between new attack techniques and new defence tactics remains rather cloudy.²

¹ Kennedy, 1994, 98.

² Ibid., 98–114.

And yet, even if my assertion is correct, and the Franks were not endangered by the external enemies throughout the entire period and in all of their territory, they nonetheless had to strengthen their fortifications in accordance with the changing threats. It can be suggested, therefore, that to the extent to which a castle was subject to greater and more frequent threats, the greater was the tendency to invest more resources in the improvement of the fortifications. The opposite argument is also logical: to the extent that the threat was less imminent, the settlers could make do with less expensive and more compact fortifications.

In the following chapters, I shall attempt to present an approach which relates to developments in Crusader castle architecture as a multi-faceted military dialectic and one which takes into account the balance of power between the Muslim and Frankish armies. The underlying assumption of this approach is that only an understanding of the *ongoing development* of the tactics of siege warfare of both sides and a better understanding of the ever-changing balance of power can enable us to gain a clear picture of the *ongoing development* of defence techniques. Siege warfare and castles account for only one part – important as it may be – of medieval military strategy, and it is impossible to separate the siege and defence tactics from the other elements of their military techniques. Besieging an individual castle is generally only one component of a wider plan of attack which always includes advancing into enemy territory and deploying siege machines, and on the other hand the advance of reinforcements and supplies to the besieged castle. This chain of events might end with the surrender of the besieged castle, the retreat of the besieging armies, or a general showdown in a field of battle.

Thus, the transformations undergone by the Frankish castles cannot be explained solely on the basis of their architectural features (as many of Kennedy's predecessors attempted to do). However, these architectural changes also cannot be explained simply through a generalised analysis of techniques typical of warfare between Muslims and Crusaders, for these were not the only components of the strategic dialectic between them. The superiority or inferiority of one of the field armies is as important as the financial capabilities of the landlords and their willingness to invest the huge sums needed to provide defence and fortifications.

As for the *balance of power* between Frankish and Muslim land forces, it is reasonable to assume that during periods of clear Frankish superiority in the field there was less of a threat to nearby Crusader castles. During these periods the Muslims were fearful of engaging in direct land battles and were quick to lift the siege and flee when Frankish reinforcements drew

near. The average duration of a Muslim siege during such periods was five or, at most, ten days,³ the length of time it took Frankish forces to come to the rescue of the besieged castles. The Frankish castles built during such periods were planned so that they could hold out for a week. A longer period of time was unnecessary and there was no need to invest huge sums in mighty fortifications or immense supplies of water and food.

In periods and regions in which the opposing land forces were more or less of equal strength, or during periods in which the Muslim armies were more formidable than those of the Franks, the frequency of Muslim sieges increased, as did their potential length. The castles erected in the frontier areas of the kingdom from the 1160s onwards were planned to withstand lengthier sieges and more frequent attacks than those of the earlier period, because the defenders within their walls could not rely on speedy relief by reinforcements from the centre of the kingdom.

We may conclude, then, that the strength of the castles and the sums needed to erect and equip them were in inverse ratio to the might of the land forces in the immediate vicinity: in periods and areas in which the Franks held military superiority they could make do with smaller, less fortified castles; whenever and wherever the Muslims held the upper hand, the Franks were in need of more mightily fortified castles.

Several factors influenced the *relative cost of incorporating defence technologies*. The stronger the Muslim land forces and the more improved their siege techniques, the longer the potential duration of the siege they could mount and the mightier the Frankish castles became. Therefore, the cost of castle building increased in a direct ratio to their potential of being besieged and the potential length of the siege warfare. Not every lord was able to assemble the funds needed to fortify and equip his castle; moreover, even if he were able to come up with such sums, it is doubtful that he would expend them unless conditions made this absolutely necessary. It is therefore quite likely that the new and expensive technologies were implemented differentially throughout the kingdom, depending on the frequency of the Muslim attacks and their geographic diffusion. More sophisticated strongholds were first erected in regions more prone to attack or those which in time became frontier areas; only later did these innovations also seep down into other regions in the interior of the kingdom. As a result of these high costs, in the final tally the frontier

³ When the besieged castles were nearer to Muslim centres, the attackers could benefit from another day or two.

castles were gradually transferred from the possession of their seigneurial lords to the military orders, which could more easily raise the necessary funding.

Thus, I maintain that study of the archaeology and military architecture are not enough to gain an understanding of their development. Technological innovations and the speed of their diffusion, financial ability, and differential capabilities of the opposing land forces were important considerations influencing military architecture. Moreover, it is not enough to point to the dialectic between Muslim attacks and Frankish defence, for there was a simultaneous, ongoing dialogue by both sides concerning the adopted technique in both siege-fare and defence. In the next chapters I shall attempt to trace, in as great detail as possible, the sieges mounted by both Franks and Muslims, and try to ascertain the relative advantages of each side in the conflict. This analysis will enable us at a later stage to better understand the significance of Frankish military architecture.

FRANKISH SIEGE MACHINERY AND LOGISTICS DURING THE FIRST CRUSADE

The siege and defence tactics employed by the Franks during the First Crusade, and also later, when they took the cities along the Mediterranean seashore, were different from those used by the Muslims during that same period. Frankish attacks were almost always supported by siege engines and siege towers, as well as by various types of artillery, whereas the Muslims did not erect towers and made little use of heavy artillery when besieging enemy castles. They preferred tactics which became traditional: direct storming of the castle, a tight blockade, tunnelling under the walls, and limited use of light artillery.⁴

The difference between the siege tactics of the two warring camps apparently did not stem from poorer technological skills of the Muslims; Latin chroniclers specifically mention that the Muslims were acquainted with heavy artillery and even employed it in defence. But the use by the Franks of heavy artillery, and especially of siege towers, was much more

⁴ See Ibn al 'Adim, II, 108, 151–52, 216, 224–25, 231, 293; III, 28, 113; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 68–69, 71–72, 74–75, 120, 150–51; William of Tyre, 3, 37, 365. 4, II, 250. In many of the earlier cases, the Muslim forces did use artillery, but the number of the mangonels, and their effectiveness show that it was a light artillery. For the Fatimid siege of Jerusalem see Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 197 (Ibn al-Athir mentions forty mangonels), and cf. Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 45.

frequent. In fact, it can be maintained that they employed both these means in almost every siege they mounted, while the Muslims did so only very rarely.

I believe that the difference between the siege tactics can be put down to the Franks' superior logistic capabilities during the first quarter of the twelfth century. They had advanced transport facilities, including four-wheeled wagons; they could call upon the services of trained craftsmen and carpenters who served in their land forces or supporting fleets; and they could count on ships for transport and much logistic support. The Muslim armies too employed the services of Muslim sailors, but they did this more to enhance their defence than their attack abilities.⁵ The Frankish superiority in logistic capabilities already came to bear during the First Crusade. The Franks began the siege of Nicaea, the first massive one mounted by the Crusaders in Asia Minor, with a tight land blockade, but what actually accounted for their victory was their superior technology and engineering, and the despair of the besieged.⁶

Descriptions of the siege of Nicaea by Latin and Greek chroniclers indicate just how much the balance of power between the Frankish and Muslim land forces influenced the morale of those within the city. At first, when the Nicaeans believed that no outside help would be forthcoming, they agreed to surrender to the Byzantine emperor. Somewhat later, when they learned that the Seljuk sultan had not abandoned them and was trying to come to their aid, they were more determined and decided not to surrender, but to fight on.⁷

The Franks then erected siege engines and positioned various types of artillery. Most of the engines were intended to protect the soldiers who were digging under the city walls to weaken their foundations,⁸ but Anna

⁵ According to Ibn al-Qalanisi, during the first siege of Tyre one of the commanders of the Muslim fleet, originating from Tripolis, who had experience in the blacksmith's trade as well as in warfare, managed to produce grappling irons with which to seize the Frankish battering rams: 'until the wooden tower almost rocked with the vigour of their pulling on them. Sometimes the Franks themselves would then break the ram, fearing for the safety of the tower, sometimes it would be bent aside or rendered useless, and sometimes it was broken by means of two stones tied together and thrown down upon it from the city wall. The Franks made a number of rams, but they were broken in this fashion one after the other. Each of them was sixty cubit (= 43 to 53 cm) in length, and was slung in the wooden tower with ropes, and at the head of each was a piece of iron weighing more than twenty pounds.' Ibn al Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 123–24.

⁶ Rogers, 1992, 16–25; Serper, 1976, 411–21.

⁷ Anna Comnena, ed. Leib, II, 2–3, pp. 7–8.

⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 6–7, pp. 9–10, provides a very detailed description of a 'rounded and well protected wooden castle' that served the diggers who tried to undermine the foundations of the big tower of Nicaea.

Comnena relates that her father, Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus, who had little faith in the Crusaders' ability to take the city, suggested that they use a new type of artillery. Anna does not provide specific details about this weapon, but she does note that the Franks did employ, *inter alia*, a rock-propelling device known as Helepoleis (ἐλεπόλεις = city-taker). The Helepoleis was already known by this name during classical antiquity, and Paul Chevedden, who has studied the development of medieval artillery for many years,⁹ believes that 'Helepoleis' does not necessarily signify a specific weapon; rather it is used to designate the most advanced type of artillery existing during each specific period of time. Chevedden provides no proof to substantiate this argument, but he bases his assertion upon it and on the fact that Anna Comnena mentions a *new* type of weapon, concluding that during the siege of Nicaea the Byzantines for the first time supplied the Franks with an artillery piece of the counterweight trebuchet type, which replaced earlier sorts of artillery (each of which had in turn been called Helepoleis).¹⁰ Though Chevedden's articles are based on a multitude of references, I have been unable to find in them support for the argument that 'Helepoleis' designated the most advanced type of artillery at a certain point in time, or that the counterweight trebuchet was already in use at the time of the siege of Nicaea. Rogers and France too, both of whom have studied the Frankish siege of Nicaea, did not find any evidence of this fact in the sources describing that event.¹¹ The question is too vast to be dealt with here in full, but it should be noted that the majority of the students of Frankish and medieval Muslim artillery follow Huuri,¹² in asserting that leverage artillery was invented in China and was brought to the East and from there to Europe, but most of them date the invention of the counterweight trebuchets to the twelfth century.¹³

⁹ See Chevedden *et al.*, 1995; 200b; Chevedden, 1995a; 1999; 2000; 2002.

¹⁰ Anna Comnena, ed. Leib, II, II, I, p. II; *Gesta Francorum*, II, 14; Chevedden, 2000, 76–79.

¹¹ France, 1994, 162, 165, 368; Rogers, 1992, 16–25; Chevedden disagrees with the way Speros Vryonis Jr read the important Greek text describing the seventh-century siege of Thessaloniki, which Vryonis himself had published, and with the manner in which Claude Cahen translated the entry referring to the trebuchet in the Arabic text of al-Tarsusi. See Vryonis, 1981; Tarsusi, ed. Cahen.

¹² Huuri, 1941.

¹³ Hill, 1973, 103–04, 108; Rogers, 1992, 168–68 and 247. White claimed already in 1962 that the counterweight trebuchet was invented in Europe in 1099, see White, 1978, 54; in 1974 he maintained that this type of engine appeared even later, White, 1975, 103; France, who does not believe that the Franks had any technological superiority over the Muslims, dates the appearance of the trebuchet to the end of the twelfth century, see France, 1997 and 1999, 122.

Nonetheless, even if the Franks did not have artillery of the counter-weight trebuchet type at their disposal when they besieged Nicaea, they were able to employ other relatively advanced types of artillery, at least some of which had been planned and built by Frankish craftsmen on the basis of knowledge they brought with them from their countries of origin. The Latin sources repeatedly mention, sometimes even by name, craftsmen and carpenters who were an inseparable element of the fighting force. They also note that craftsmen were hired and paid to perform professional tasks, some of them even losing their lives while engaged in construction efforts.¹⁴ For example, two German noblemen, Henry of Aische and Count Hartmund, funded the construction of a mobile roof of oak planks to protect twenty knights who were digging under the city walls. This stratagem failed, however, and the roof collapsed under the weight of the rocks hurled down by the defenders.¹⁵ Some time later, craftsmen from southern France in the entourages of the count of Toulouse and the bishop of Le Puy were hired to erect a very high tower along Nicaea's southern wall. The warriors atop this tower successfully created a breach in the wall, but the defenders soon blocked it.¹⁶

The technological skills of the Franks were not limited to constructing siege engines and artillery. They managed to transport boats overland from the Aegean seashore to the shores of the Lake of Nicaea. This they did by joining together three or four wagons, creating large platforms each of which could carry one boat. One source reports that 'during the night, by means of ropes wrapped around the necks of men and horses, they pulled [the boats] to the sea, a distance of seven miles or more'. From this description we learn that the Franks brought heavy four-wheeled wagons with them, and were able to move these wagons using horses. This source emphasises the ability of Frankish craftsmen and carpenters to build cranes under difficult battlefield conditions, and to harness horses to pull heavy wagons.¹⁷

According to the Latin chroniclers, the breakthrough in the siege of Nicaea came when a Lombard carpenter and engine-builder managed to

¹⁴ William of Tyre, 3, 6 (5)–7 (6), 202–04: *scrophas*, *mangana*, *petrarias*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3, 7 (6), 203–04; Albert of Aachen, 2, 30, 322.

¹⁶ Anna Comnena, ed. Leib, II, 1, pp. 9–10; Raymond of Aguilers, 43–44; William of Tyre, 3, 9 (8), 205–06; Albert of Aachen, 2, 31, 322–23.

¹⁷ Raymond of Aguilers, 44–45; William of Tyre, 3, 8 (7), 204–05; Albert of Aachen, 2, 32, 323–24; *Gesta Francorum*, II, 16–17; Fulcher of Chartres, I, 10, 187–88. Anna Comnena ascribes the transfer of the boats to the Byzantine forces, see Anna Comnena, ed. Leib, II, 11, 3, pp. 11–12.

build a machine sufficiently fortified to withstand attacks by the defenders (for which he was generously paid and supplied with materials), thus providing cover for those who dug under the wall's foundations. It was this effort which finally brought the lengthy siege to an end.¹⁸

The Frankish sieges of Antioch,¹⁹ Ma'arat an-Nu'uman,²⁰ and Arka²¹ also entailed the construction of siege engines and the use of heavy artillery. Siege towers reduced the advantage provided by the height of the city walls, and in cases in which they were not effective enough the Franks constructed real wooden fortifications. They were used, for example, in the siege of Antioch, where the Franks first initiated a lengthy land blockade, while the defenders, for their part, mounted surprise attacks and quick sorties through the city gates. At this time the defenders did not yet have special openings in the wall for such sorties,²² but time and again they managed to surprise the Franks by opening the gates and rushing out to strike at them. The latter responded by quickly erecting wooden fortifications to defend the camps of the besieging forces.²³

Thus, at a fairly early stage of the siege of Antioch they built a *castrum* or an external fortification (*antemurale*) which came to be known as Malregard and was intended to defend the camp of Bohemond and his men.²⁴ Immediately upon the arrival of reinforcements, which included craftsmen and building materials, another wooden fortification (*munitio*) which they called the Mahomeria, was constructed on a site that previously had been a Muslim mosque.²⁵ A third fortification, given the name Novum Presidium and manned by 500 warriors, prevented the defenders from exiting through one of the city gates.²⁶

Labourers, craftsmen – and sometime even mercenaries – from among the Crusader forces were employed to construct and maintain such

¹⁸ Albert of Aachen, 2, 35–36, 325–26; William of Tyre, 3, 11 (10), 208–09.

¹⁹ William of Tyre, 4, 15, 255; Albert of Aachen, 3, 40, 367.

²⁰ William of Tyre, 7, 9, 353–55; according to Albert of Aachen, 5, 30, 451, the Franks dismantled the *castrum* of Talmaria, usually identified with Tell Mannaa. According to Kamal al-Din, the Franks constructed the siege engine with the wood they cut in M'ara, see Ibn al-'Adim, II, 142; see also Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 45–47.

²¹ William of Tyre, 7, 14, 360–61.

²² The development of the *poternas* will be discussed later in this book. For the absence of posterns, see William of Tyre, 5, 3, 273–74 and also 5, 6, 277–79.

²³ Albert of Aachen, 3, 40 and 41, 367–68; William of Tyre, 4, 15, 255–56.

²⁴ *Gesta Francorum*, 5, 29–30; William of Tyre, 5, 4, 274; Albert of Aachen, 3, 63, 383–84.

²⁵ In March 1098; see Anselm of Ribemonte, Hagenmeyer, *Kreuzzugsbriefe*, 158–59; *Gesta Francorum*, 7, 42.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7, 42; William of Tyre, 5, 7, 279–81.

fortifications. They were well paid, for demand greatly outstripped supply. In one case, when the Crusade's leaders decided to construct a fortification opposite Antioch's western gate, it was impossible to find persons who would build or man it without receiving due compensation. In the end, Tancred agreed to take this task upon himself, but only after he was promised a sizeable monthly income of 40 marks from the public treasury (*ex publico*). From this description we learn of the existence of such a treasury and also that sums were paid out of it for building operations connected with military action.²⁷

All these fortifications were erected in a matter of weeks, sometimes even days. It can therefore be assumed – though this is not explicitly stated – that they were built of wood and were similar to such fortifications known to us from contemporary Europe. A letter written by one Anslem of Ribemonte, who was party to the construction of one of the fortifications, to the lord of Reims, indicates that it was built atop an earthen motte, which indicates that the castle was of the motte and bailey type and was probably constructed of wood.²⁸ William of Tyre relates that Bohemond was unable to defend one of the fortifications, so he set it on fire.²⁹ In the exceptional cases in which they were built of stone, this is specifically mentioned: thus, for example, during the siege of Antioch the Franks built a wall of solid materials ('factumque muro cum propuganculist ex opere solido').³⁰

All these sources and examples testify to a sizeable presence of expert craftsmen in the Crusader forces and to their willingness to use their specific skills for proper remuneration, but it is quite clear that such a situation was not characteristic of the Muslim armies as well.

Frankish technical capabilities and their ability to adopt innovations while mounting a siege were obvious during the siege of Ma'arat an-Nu'uman (12 November–12 December 1098). At first they tried to storm it, using ladders, but they had only two ladders. 'Had they had enough ladders', claim the Latin sources, 'the city would have already fallen

²⁷ The castle [presidium] was erected on a hill formerly occupied by a monastery. It is worthwhile to compare the attitude towards mosques with that towards the monastery. William of Tyre, 5, 8, 281; Raymond of Aguilers, ed. *RHC*, 8, 250; *Gesta Francorum*, 7, 42.

²⁸ Hagenmeyer, *Kreuzzugsbriefe*, 158–59.

²⁹ William of Tyre, 6, 6, 313. According to Albert of Aachen they set fire to the castle and destroyed the moat: 'idem praesidium totum igni succenderunt; vallumque illius diruentes. . .' Albert of Aachen, 4, 33, 412.

³⁰ Raymond of Aguilers, ed. *RHC*, 9, 252; William of Tyre, 6, 1, 306.

during the second day of the siege.³¹ When the frontal attack failed, the Franks began to construct shelters, artillery, and a mobile wooden tower, the first built during the First Crusade. According to Rogers, it was less perfect than those constructed during later sieges; though it could be moved by means of four wheels, warriors could not leap directly from it onto the walls.³² The Muslims propelled rocks and a buzzing beehive at the tower, but to no avail, for according to Ibn al-Qalanisi the tower was higher than the walls and the defenders could not protect themselves. Ibn al-ʿAdim too noted that the capture of Maʿarat an-Nuʿuman was made possible only after the Franks had cut down all the trees in the city's surroundings in order to build a wooden *burj* [tower] which dominated the walls. They attacked the city from all sides until they managed to place the tower against the wall. Only then did they raise their ladders and break into the city. We see, then, that the Muslim sources note the tower's height as its primary advantage, disregarding its mobility.³³

From the descriptions of this siege it is also obvious that in order to implement Frankish siege tactics, which relied on the construction of heavy engines, they had to rely not only on carpenters and other skilled craftsmen. They also needed devoted rank and file troops trained to carry out tasks connected with the use of these engines. Thus, for example, in order to set siege engines against the walls one needed soldiers to carry weighty planks of wood, fill in dykes and defensive trenches, collect rocks to be propelled, and then drag the heavy engines, all this at a risk to their lives. During the siege of Maʿarat an-Nuʿuman, the troops in question were an unusually wild group, known as *tafuri*, who had a reputation among the Turks as being ruthless and uninhibited warriors, even cannibals!³⁴

After completion of the tower, the fighting was primarily between the Frankish soldiers on its platform and Muslim defenders who faced them at the same height atop the walls. By means of lances and artillery, the attackers, commanded by William VI of Montpellier, provided cover for their fellow warriors who leaned ladders against the fortifications in order to scale the walls, and for others engaged in digging underneath their foundations.³⁵

³¹ Raymond of Aguilers, ed. *RHC*, 14, 268; William of Tyre, 7, 9, 353–54.

³² Rogers, 1992, 41–45.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Guibert of Nogent, 7, 23, 241–42.

³⁵ Raymond of Aguilers, ed. *RHC*, 14, 269–70; *Gesta Francorum*, 10, 78–79.

FRANKISH ATTACKS AND MUSLIM ARTILLERY

The Muslims frequently used artillery to ward off attacks by the Franks against their own cities and castles. For example, in preparation for the Frankish siege of Antioch, the Turkish governor commanded the city's residents to prepare stocks of iron and wood from which to create artillery pieces. The residents obeyed the governor, and their artillery hurled heavy rocks and fired arrows at the besiegers, forcing them to retreat to a safe distance from the walls.³⁶ William of Tyre notes that Antioch's rulers imposed most of the work involved in preparing the artillery upon the city's Christian population:

If machines were to be erected or immensely heavy beams moved, that work was at once laid upon them . . . Others had to furnish the huge stones which were being constantly hurled beyond the walls by the engines and to manage the ropes by which these were operated.³⁷

Similar behaviour is recorded in descriptions of Muslim preparations for the siege of Jerusalem by the Franks. Commanders of the Fatimid forces made ready pieces of artillery and stationed them atop the city walls.³⁸ William was convinced that the Muslim artillery was no more than an excellent imitation of that of the Franks:

Following our example, they built from these [beams], inside the walls, machines equal to ours in height, but of better material [*Machinas interius nostris equipollentes, sed meliore compactas materia certatim erigebant*]. This they did with the greatest enthusiasm, that their engines might not be inferior to ours either in construction or in material. Guards were maintained constantly on the walls and towers, who watched intently all that was done in our army, especially in regard to devices which pertained to engines of war. Every detail observed was at once reported to the chief men of Jerusalem, who strove with great skill to imitate the work of the Christians, that they might meet all our efforts with equal ingenuity.³⁹

³⁶ Albert of Aachen, 3, 40 and 41, 367–68; William of Tyre, 4, 11, 248–50 and 4, 15, 255–56.

³⁷ William of Tyre, 5, 19, 296–97: 'Nam si erigende erant machine aut inmensi ponderis transferende trabes, statim id eis muneris iniungebatur.'

³⁸ The preparations included accumulation of timber and herds, the poisoning of nearby cisterns and wells, and the deportation of the local Christian population. See William of Tyre, 7, 23, 374–75: 'an adequate supply of beams . . . which . . . had been brought in with wise forethought for the defense of Jerusalem'. For the construction of Muslim artillery see *ibid.*, 8, 15, 405–07; Raymond of Aguilers, ed. *RHC*, 20, 299.

³⁹ William of Tyre, 8, 8, 395–97.

Imitation, William goes on, 'was comparatively easy, for the people of Jerusalem had at their command many more skilled workmen and building tools, as well as larger supplies of iron, copper, ropes, and everything else necessary than had our people'. He records that these engines, like the ones built by the Muslims during the Frankish siege of Antioch, were constructed by Eastern Christians who were forcibly recruited for the difficult task, which entailed carrying heavy wooden planks and other materials.⁴⁰ William, however, attributes the knowledge necessary to build these engines to the Muslim defenders of Jerusalem, whose efforts became increasingly effective during the later stages of the siege, when real artillery battles were conducted between the Franks' siege engines and the Muslim artillery on the walls. From William's chronicle one can sense an atmosphere of technological competition, as each side made an effort to study and adopt the enemy's war machinery.⁴¹

The similarity between the Frankish siege weapons and those used by the Muslims for defence was most noticeable during the unsuccessful attempt to take 'Arka and the successful siege of Jerusalem. Since the topographical features at 'Arka prevented effective use of siege engines, the Franks tried their hand at the tactics favoured by the Muslims: mining under the foundations of the city walls. Despite their strenuous efforts, they were unsuccessful.⁴² Artillery, too, was not enough to take the city: the Muslims mounted on the walls artillery no less effective than that of the Franks and managed to hit an important Frankish knight.⁴³

The siege of Jerusalem⁴⁴ also began with frontal attacks, whose failure was put down to the lack of ladders.⁴⁵ The commanders soon decided to refrain from such attacks until they should have heavy artillery and siege towers at their disposal. During most of the siege (until mid-July 1099), the Franks engaged in the logistics which the construction of siege engines and towers entailed, until the two leading camps in the Crusader force each possessed a tower of its own. The one commanded by Godfrey of Bouillon built its tower along the northern wall, while the second camp,

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Albert of Aachen, 6, 15, 474–76; Raymond of Aguilers, ed. *RHC*, 20, 298–99; Tudebode, 15, 106–07.

⁴² Guibert of Nogent, 6, 23, 218–19; Albert of Aachen, 5, 31, 451–52.

⁴³ Albert of Aachen, 5, 31, 451–52; Raymond of Aguilers, ed. *RHC*, 15, 275–76; *Gesta Francorum*, 10, 85.

⁴⁴ For the chronology of the Frankish siege on Jerusalem, see Prawer, 1985a; Rogers, 1992, 47–63.

⁴⁵ For the first stages of the siege, see William of Tyre, 8, 6, 392; Albert of Aachen, 6, 2, 467; Raymond of Aguilers, ed. *RHC*, 20, 293–97; *Gesta Francorum*, 10, 88; Fulcher of Chartres, 1, 27, 293–94.

under the command of Raymond of St Gilles, erected its tower on Mt Zion. The logistics involved were far from negligible: they had to ascertain where suitable wooden beams could be found; furthermore, in order to cut down trees, prepare the heavy beams, and transport them they needed craftsmen and carpenters, camels, donkeys, horses, and experienced waggoners.⁴⁶ Particularly hard hit by a lack of experienced craftsmen, the Crusaders were aided by two Genoese vessels that dropped anchor at Jaffa on 17 June 1099, only eleven days after the siege of Jerusalem began. Their commander agreed to supply the force surrounding Jerusalem with professional builders ('viri prudentes et nautarum more architectorie habentes artis periciam') to 'construct engines in the shortest time possible'. These craftsmen 'brought with them a great selection of tools which proved to be of advantage to the besieging forces'.⁴⁷

Positioning the towers, too, called for much expertise, for this entailed transporting them and putting together the tower's numerous sections under enemy fire. Both of these tasks were carried out under the cover of darkness to reduce the danger to a minimum. The builders' expertise enabled them to do this in one night and complete the entire undertaking before sunrise.⁴⁸ The fighting, accompanied by curses and acts of sorcery, raged around these towers. William relates that 'two Muslim witches and three apprentice witches', who threw a curse upon these most efficient siege engines of the Franks, died in the line of duty atop the walls of Jerusalem.⁴⁹

The rank-and-file labourers generally went unpaid, but the wages of the others (particularly expert craftsmen) were paid out of donations, since none of the Crusade commanders – with the exception of the count of Toulouse – had the funds necessary to hire expert builders. Yet, even Raymond of Toulouse's men were ordered to place their beasts of burden and servants at the disposal of those who engaged in transporting building materials, and every two knights in his entourage took upon themselves to supply one ladder or one mobile shelter.⁵⁰

From the detailed descriptions of the sieges of Nicaea, Antioch, Ma'arat an-Nu'man, and Jerusalem, as well as the less detailed ones of

⁴⁶ William of Tyre, 8, 7, 393–95; Albert of Aachen, 6, 2, 467–68.

⁴⁷ William of Tyre, 8, 9, 397; Raymond of Aguilers, ed. *RHC*, 20, 294–95; *Gesta Francorum*, 10, 88.

⁴⁸ Albert of Aachen, 6, 11, 472; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 48; William of Tyre, 8, 9, 399: 'By the aid of these people the pilgrims easily accomplished works which before their arrival had seemed difficult and well-nigh impossible.'

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 8, 15, 405–07; Raymond of Aguilers, ed. *RHC*, 20, 299.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 20, 297–98.

other cities conquered during the First Crusade, we see that the Franks made use of complex wooden structures and sophisticated artillery to breach the fortifications which defended the enemy. The presence in their camp at all times of expert carpenters and craftsmen, in addition to the relatively high availability of Italian fleets, eased these rather complicated efforts. Commanding a siege based upon artillery and siege towers called for much experience in deploying combined forces charged with executing diverse missions: construction of the siege engines and artillery, moving them towards the walls, defending them, and doing battle with the enemy at specific locations along the walls.

Advanced types of stationary artillery, prepared in advance of attack and mounted atop the walls, were used by the Muslim troops. William of Tyre was convinced that the Frankish artillery far surpassed that of the Muslims, and that the latter were in the habit of imitating that used by the Crusaders. During the First Crusade, however, the Muslims had no opportunity to build mobile field artillery or to employ heavy artillery during attacks and sieges.

The evident superiority of the Frankish armies over their adversaries, which enabled them to capture many of the coastal and inland cities of the Levant, did not emanate therefore from technologies which were unknown to the Muslim armies, but from their superior logistics and the presence of experienced carpenters and builders in the field armies. This advantage facilitated the construction of complex machines even under the difficult conditions which prevailed during the siege itself. The Muslims, who were able to construct similar installations to defend their own fortifications, did not possess similar logistical capabilities during their own siege campaigns.

Frankish siege tactics

During the quarter century between the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099 and the taking of Tyre in 1124, the Franks launched more than twenty sieges against Muslim cities, conquering thirteen of them (including almost all of the coastal cities), while they continued to perfect their siege techniques.¹ Many fortified sites were captured after heavy bombardment and after the construction of huge wooden siege engines and towers. The Franks exploited the relatively lengthy intervals between sieges for preparations and to amass provisions and equipment in their own strongholds.

In these same years the Muslims engaged in nineteen sieges, but most of them were directed against fortifications held by Muslim troops when Muslim forces were both the besiegers and the defenders. In the majority of the attacks on the Frankish castles the Muslim armies refrained from erecting siege engines and made little use of heavy artillery to breach the walls and most of them did not end in victory. From descriptions of the sieges it is clear that Frankish military superiority did not result from the employment of types of artillery unknown to the Muslims, for the latter used similar weapons when defending themselves. The Franks held the advantage in two primary spheres: logistics and manpower, and land battles.

FRANKISH SUPERIORITY IN LOGISTICS AND
PROFESSIONAL MANPOWER

It was the Franks' superior logistic capabilities which enabled them to erect complex wooden structures even while mounting a siege against

¹ For the siege of Arsuf, see William of Tyre, 10, 13 (14), 468–69; Fulcher of Chartres, 2, 8, 399–400; Albert of Aachen, 7, 3–5, 507–11; for the siege of Caesarea: William of Tyre, 10, 14 (15), 469–71; Fulcher of Chartres, 2, 9, 401–04; for the siege of Acre: Fulcher of Chartres, 2, 25, 462–63; William of Tyre, 10, 27 (28), 486–87; for the siege of Sidon: Fulcher of Chartres, 2, 44, 543–48; William of Tyre, 11, 14, 517–19. For a detailed description of siege engines see Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 107; For the siege of Tyre, see Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 121–26; Fulcher of Chartres, 2, 46, 558–61; William of Tyre, 11, 17, 521–22; Ibn Shaddād, al-A'laq, 163–64.

cities distant from the seashore. They used heavy four-wheeled carts, a vehicle unknown in the Levant until then,² to haul the weighty wooden beams and artillery. During the siege of Beirut, for example, they cut down trees in a grove not far from the city and transported the heavy beams to the foot of the walls, where they constructed siege towers, built the artillery and shelters, cut the foliage to protect the siege engines, and even put together the ladders needed to scale the walls.³ Even when attacking inland cities they were able to secure on the spot the materials needed to build the wooden siege structures. While besieging the city of Apamea in 1106, for example, Tancred successfully used 'all types of siege engines'⁴ and also made use of well-equipped fleets when besieging a coastal city. The same can be said for the siege of al-Atharib in which Tancred employed catapults and a huge battering ram which crumbled the upper sections of the wall. Ibn al-ʿAdim relates that the ramming could be heard at a distance of a mile and a half, and that the walls were destroyed.⁵

The Frankish logistic capabilities did not cease with the taking of Tyre. In mid-March or early April of 1126, Pons, count of Tripoli, and Baldwin II, king of Jerusalem, mounted a siege against Raffaniya. Pons brought with him machines and everything necessary for laying siege to a city, including provisions sufficient for several days, and the besieged city of Raffaniya succumbed after eighteen days.⁶ In that same year Bohemond built siege engines when he besieged Cafartab.⁷

The efficacy of Frankish sieges, in which artillery and siege engines were used, was dependent upon the presence of expert craftsmen in the fighting force and cooperation with Italian or other European fleets.⁸ The ships transported warriors to the battlefield, protected the land forces against attack by the Fatimid fleets, and at times their captains even agreed to dismantle masts which were then used to build siege engines and towers. Among the ships' crews experienced carpenters were more numerous than in the land forces, and it was they who often helped to

² See Bulliet, 1975.

³ William of Tyre, II, 13, 515–16.

⁴ William of Tyre, 10, 22 (23), 481–82: 'Singula percurrens argumenta quibus hostium solent expugnari presidia, nichil omittens eorum que obsessis molestias solent inferre graviores.. .' Ibn al-Athir ascribes the fall of the city to internal strife and treason, see Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 232–35.

⁵ Ibn al-ʿAdim, II, 155–56.

⁶ William of Tyre, 13, 19, 610–11.

⁷ 'copiis et machinis ad impugnationem presidiorum necessaries per operam artificum fabrefactis. . .'

⁸ See Foster, 1978, chap. 5: 'Sea power and siege warfare,' 267–97.

build towers and other wooden structures at the battle site. In return for their cooperation, the Italians were granted future trading rights in the conquered cities. Thus, already in 1100, Haifa fell to a combined Crusader and Venetian force which constructed a siege tower and artillery out of masts removed from the Venetian ships.⁹ The tower erected in 1101 during the siege of Caesarea – though never completed – was also built of ship masts (this time of the Genoese fleet), and during the preparations for this siege the fleet moved forward, slowly but surely, at the land forces' rate of advance.¹⁰

The number of ships participating in sieges fluctuated from city to city, but was never less than several score. According to Ibn al-Qalanisi, for example, the Genoese fleet which took part in the capture of Latakia, and later in the conquest of Jubail and the siege of Acre, numbered ninety ships,¹¹ while a Genoese fleet of sixty ships aided the forces besieging Tripoli.¹² In February 1110, King Baldwin took advantage of the fact that several Genoese galleys were spending the winter in his kingdom's ports to begin the siege of Beirut with their support.¹³ Since the Latin Kingdom did not possess a fleet of its own, at least during the first decades of the twelfth century, launching a siege against a Muslim city was generally conditional upon the presence of European ships. The arrival of such a fleet was also seen as an opportunity to begin a siege against a Muslim port city. However, even though Italian ships were already involved in siege actions during the First Crusade, their presence was not always necessary. At Antioch, for example, the Crusaders built wooden castles without the help of Italian craftsmen, and the same was true when they besieged Ma'arat an-Nu'man, where they were able by themselves to construct a simple siege tower. Godfrey of Bouillion too was able to build two siege towers during his unsuccessful siege of Arsuf in 1099.¹⁴

On the few occasions in which non-Italian fleets participated in siege actions, the seamen generally received less compensation for their services.

⁹ *Translatio Sancti Nicolai*, 276–77.

¹⁰ Fulcher of Chartres, 3, 17, 20, 662, 672.

¹¹ According to Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 59–62, the Franks managed, in an earlier attempt, to construct a tower opposite the city walls. The Muslims succeeded in destroying this tower to launch 'sorties,' and even to force the Franks to fighting at close quarters, in which one of their higher officers lost his life. See also William of Tyre, 10, 27 (28), 486–87; Fulcher of Chartres, 2, 25, 462–63; Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 205–06, 219.

¹² Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 88, April, 1109.

¹³ William of Tyre, 11, 13, 515–16; Fulcher of Chartres, 2, 42, 534–36; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 99–100, quotes the number of forty Genoese ships.

¹⁴ William of Tyre, 9, 19, 445–46; Fulcher of Chartres, 1, 33, 326–34; Albert of Aachen, 7, 1–6, 507–11.

William of Tyre relates, with astonishment, of the arrival on a pilgrimage of a Norwegian fleet commanded by 'the brother' of the king of Norway. The Norwegians, he writes, requested no compensation other than food in return for their help in the conquest of Sidon. According to Ibn al-Qalanisi, the Norwegian fleet numbered no less than sixty ships.¹⁵ One year later, in 1111, Baldwin I set out on his unsuccessful attempt to capture Tyre, even though the fleets at his disposal were not Italian.¹⁶ He made an effort to recruit as many ships as he could, and constructed siege towers from the ships which he acquired and dismantled.¹⁷

The Franks' logistic advantages led them to employ siege tactics with which they were familiar, while the few cases in which they tried using other ones ended in failure. Thus, for example, when Jocelyn attempted to capture a tower in the vicinity of Aleppo by mining under its walls (the tactic preferred by the Muslims), the tower, built of sun-dried bricks (*ex crudis lateribus compacta*), collapsed and buried him alive. After much effort, his troops extricated the seriously wounded Jocelyn. His condition did not deter him from setting out to do battle with the sultan of Iconium (Konya) who was besieging one of his castles. The sultan beat a hasty retreat upon hearing that Jocelyn was advancing towards him on a stretcher.¹⁸ This story is indicative of two facts: that the Franks were inexperienced when it came to undermining the walls of Muslim fortifications, and that the Muslims greatly feared a Frankish field army, even when its commander was seriously wounded.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FRANKISH SUPERIORITY IN LAND BATTLES

As noted earlier, sieges were not campaigns conducted solely between the opposing forces on the spot. Their result was dependent to a great extent on the ability of the Muslim land forces to rush reinforcements and supplies to the besieged stronghold. The length of time between the beginning of the siege and the arrival of reinforcements obviously influenced the ability of the defenders to hold out; on occasion, only short

¹⁵ William of Tyre, II, 14, 517–19: 'nichil preter victum pro stipendiis exigentes.' See also Fulcher of Chartres, 2, 44, 543–48; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 106.

¹⁶ Albert of Aachen, 12, 4, 690; Baldwin I relied upon a Byzantine fleet and provisions which he got by the sea; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 125, mentions 200 ships, including 30 warships which were burned down during the Frankish retreat.

¹⁷ William of Tyre, II, 17, 521; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 121.

¹⁸ William of Tyre 14, 3, 634 s. a. 1131.

periods of time proved to be the difference between rescue or death. During the Latin Kingdom's first decades, Frankish superiority in land battles increased to such an extent that in most cases they could prevent the Muslims from rushing reinforcements to a surrounded city. This superiority, coupled with the alacrity with which the Crusaders could mobilise and advance their armies, contributed greatly to the speedy surrender of Muslim castles and cities.

Ibn al-Qalanisi relates, for example, that the commander of Acre during the First Crusade expected relief to arrive from Damascus and rescue him from the Frankish siege, but he surrendered when it was late in coming. He then made his way to Egypt to explain to the Fatimid rulers what led him to capitulate.¹⁹ During the siege of Tripoli, its Muslim defenders too awaited the arrival of an Egyptian fleet which was prevented from entering the port by contrary winds. The defenders lost spirit and the Franks broke into the city, looted it, and took its women and children captive.²⁰ The siege of Beirut, on the other hand, was a relatively lengthy one because time and again the Fatimid fleet tried to enter the city and come to the aid of its defenders. At first these were nineteen ships which successfully brought reinforcements to Beirut, while later on 300 horsemen made their way to the city but were too late to prevent its fall.²¹

The period of time of which the Franks could avail themselves when conducting a siege was not unlimited, but it was much longer than that at the disposal of the Muslims in similar circumstances. Whenever the Franks depended on European fleets, the length of their siege was limited to the period during which the Mediterranean could be safely sailed, towards the end of which the ships returned to their home ports. Even when the seamen agreed to spend the winter in the region, the cost of a lengthy siege was extremely high. During the first siege of Tyre in 1111–1112, for instance, the Franks prepared to maintain it throughout the winter months: they dug a ditch for their defence and cut down fruit orchards in the vicinity for wood with which to erect structures which would facilitate a long winter's sojourn.²² Tyre, from its earliest days built and equipped to withstand lengthy siege campaigns, held out. Its defenders constructed stone towers taller than the Frankish siege towers and exploited their height to set afire those of the Franks, leading to

¹⁹ Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 61–62; Ibn al-Athir, 220.

²⁰ Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 88.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 99–100.

²² Albert of Aachen, 12, 5, 691; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 121.

demoralisation in the ranks of the attackers and abandonment of the siege after four months.

The Franks profited from their superiority on the ground even in cases in which the Muslims managed to come to the aid of the besieged. During the siege of Artah mounted by Tancred in April 1105, for example, Ridwan, the ruler of Aleppo, was able to rush reinforcements to the besieged city which included many cavalry and thousands of infantry. The Franks, awed at the might of the army arraigned against them, began to withdraw, but at a certain stage they halted their flight, took hold of themselves, and renewed the battle. The Muslims, so certain of their victory that they had already turned to collecting the spoils of war, were put to the sword.²³

The Muslim siege of Jaffa in 1123 ended unsuccessfully when they were unable to harm the defenders or weaken their resolve, but also because they feared that residents in the area surrounding Jaffa would come to the aid of the besieged city (ne regionis populus . . . conveniret subsidium). The Egyptian fleet took advantage of favourable winds to flee to Tyre. Another attempt by the Ascalonites to renew the siege of Jaffa ended within no more than seven hours.²⁴

Fear of reinforcements was not solely characteristic of the Muslims. There were cases in which the Franks lifted the siege of a distant castle due to advancing Muslim reinforcements. In the siege of Aleppo in 1124 the Franks withdrew when they learned that a Muslim army was drawing near, even though they had built houses and huts in preparation for a lengthy campaign.²⁵

The second siege of Tyre, 1124

The siege tactics of the Franks achieved their highest level already during the second campaign against Tyre in 1124, which was planned in great detail, applying all the lessons learned from earlier sieges.

A SUPPORTING FLEET

Like almost all earlier sieges, this one too was supported by a fleet of many ships, in this case provided by the Venetians, who in return were promised one-third of the city and its seignury. The Venetians supplied not only

²³ Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 228.

²⁴ William of Tyre, II, 24, 532.

²⁵ Ibn al Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 172–73.

ships but also all the provisions and equipment needed for a complex siege. Once the equipment had been unloaded, the ships were dragged ashore and dismantled, except for one which remained at sea in case of an emergency. The Franks and Venetians dug a ditch around their camp which ran 'from the exterior sea to the interior one' (a mari superiori ad inferius) to protect the besiegers.

Craftsmen

The patriarch (deputising for the king who was held captive by the Muslims) and the lords of the kingdom hired experienced carpenters and engineers, provided them with construction materials, and instructed them to build a tower high enough to enable them to engage the defenders atop the wall in face-to-face combat, a tower that would even give them an advantage of height over their rivals. The Venetians in turn recruited their own workmen and supplied them with building materials from the stores they had brought with them. The craftsmen were also charged with building catapults to hurl huge stones with the intention of weakening the walls and towers and of terrorising the defending residents.²⁶ In this case too, the Venetians built their own machines separately from the rest of the Franks.

The Franks also hired the services of expert catapult operators (*docentibus his qui iaculandi periciam erant assecuti*) whose mission was to hurl the projectiles so accurately as to destroy the city's towers and walls.²⁷ We can learn much about the special status of the catapult operators from the treatment meted out to one of them who was hired in the latter stages of the siege, when the Franks realised that one of the giant catapults operated by the Muslims from within the city was more precise than their own, and that its rock projectiles endangered the very existence of their huge machines. The Franks had quickly understood that none of them had the necessary expertise to improve the precision of their catapults. To execute this complex task they hired an Armenian by the name of Havedic, a resident of Antioch, 'who was said to be very proficient in the art of aiming and hurling the mighty stones (*qui in ea facultate dicebatur instructissimus*).' When describing this episode, not

²⁶ 'Machines capable of hurling huge stones which would shatter the walls and towers and carry consternation to the hearts of those within the city were also ordered built' [Machinas nichilominus iaculatorias fabricari precipit, quibus magnis molaribus turres et menia concutiantur et civibus terror inferatur]. William of Tyre, 13, 6, 593–94.

²⁷ William of Tyre, 13, 10, 597.

only did William of Tyre note the name of the Armenian expert – an honour he generally reserved only for famous Frankish commanders – but he specifically noted that Havedic easily hit every target pointed out to him. Moreover, he received proper compensation from the public treasury so that he could maintain himself in the magnificent style to which he was accustomed (*designatum est ei honestum de publico salarium, unde se pro modo suo magnifice poterat exhibere*).²⁸ It is difficult not to gain the impression that during the siege of Tyre use was made for the first time of a new type of weapon, the aligning of which called for great expertise and which could hurl huge rock projectiles over the walls. It also seems fairly clear that both sides employed especially heavy artillery machines. Indeed, Syriac sources which provide a description of this siege do make reference to a new type of weapon: a huge mangonel (*manganīqē rawrbē*, of *qalqūmē sagī'ē* in Syriac). This piece of artillery breached the walls and destroyed many of the city's towers.²⁹ The detailed descriptions (particularly of the great difficulty in aiming it precisely) may be an indication that we have here evidence of the first use of a counterweight trebuchet. If this indeed be the case, great importance should be ascribed to the fact that it was precisely an Armenian artillery expert who knew how to align it better than others, though it would also seem that both the Venetians and the defenders of Tyre had the necessary knowledge to construct such a mangonel.

THE MUSLIM REACTION

We have noted that not only were the Muslims able to construct more sophisticated catapults than those of the Franks, but they also knew how to operate them more efficiently. The great rocks hurled by the Muslims spread fear among the besieging forces and turned the entire campaign into an artillery battle. The Muslims also set up machines atop their walls which fired arrows, stones, and spears. During such attacks, no Franks would dare remain within their range and those charged with guarding their own catapults and war engines were in constant danger of their lives. The Franks were aided to some extent by the great clouds of dust raised by splintering rocks and crumbling plaster which gave them some cover for

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Tritton and Gibb, 1933, 95; Anonymous, 1234, 71.

their movements. The rocks hurled by both sides flew over the walls, hitting people and structures both within and without the city.

Sorties out of the city

The Muslim defenders were from time to time able to rush out and force the Franks to engage in face-to-face combat. What made this difficult, however, was the fact that Tyre had but one gate, and this too had no wickets, thus making a sortie extremely dangerous.³⁰ One such sortie is described by William of Tyre in relatively great detail. A few young defenders rushed out of the city intending to set fire to the catapults and the siege towers. They did succeed in setting fire to 'one of our most effective engines', but one of the Franks climbed to the top of the tower and poured water onto the flames, and even though he was shot at by all the Muslim archers on the wall they failed to hit him. As for the young men who carried out this daring sortie, they were killed to the last man.³¹

SPEED AND EFFICACY OF RELIEF FROM OUTSIDE THE CITY

In addition to their upper hand in the artillery campaign, the Franks also held superiority in land battles during the siege of Tyre. The residents of Tyre turned for help to the rulers of Damascus and of Egypt. The Franks prepared for the oncoming land engagements by dividing their forces in three: all the cavalry and mercenary foot soldiers were deployed to meet the army advancing from Damascus, many of the Venetians prepared to engage the Egyptian fleet, while the forces which had congregated from all over the kingdom, together with more Venetians, were left to guard the siege machines and towers (*machinas et castella*). It was their duty to ensure that the siege continued as planned, for all this time the operators of the siege engines did not decrease their efforts, the artillery continued to fire its projectiles, and engagements outside the gate did not cease.³² The fact that the Franks did not halt their siege efforts even in the face of oncoming danger from reinforcements shows that they were confident that the military advantage was theirs.

³⁰ William of Tyre, 13, 7, 594–95: among the defenders of the city there were 700 Damascene horsemen, who gave the citizens an example of proper warfare, despite their gentleness and feminine character. . .

³¹ William of Tyre, 13, 10, 597.

³² *Ibid.*, 13, 9, 595–97.

The approach of the reinforcements did not raise the morale of the besieged. They gathered in groups to discuss the city's difficult situation, especially famine and the lack of provisions. Finally, a proposal that Tyre surrender was brought before the elders and governor of the city, and the general assembly decided to submit to the Franks.³³ Even the arrival of the ruler of Damascus did not change the situation; he was mostly instrumental in concluding the terms of surrender with the Franks, by which the residents of Tyre would be allowed to remain in their homes and maintain their property.

The lower classes in the Frankish camp opposed this decision, which prevented them from looting the city, but supporters of the treaty prevailed. On 7 July 1124 Tyre surrendered, and its residents rushed outside the walls to see just how the Franks had succeeded in conquering a city with such strong fortifications. They 'examine[d] the form of the machines and . . . gaze[d] at the height of the movable towers'. They also looked with respect at where the Crusader camps were located, and even wished to learn the commanders' names. In short, they studied every detail that might be of use in the future.³⁴ The Franks, for their part, also closely scrutinised the city's fortifications – the strength of the buildings, the massive walls, and high towers – and its port. Such behaviour on the part of both sides to the conflict is indicative of the dialectics between besiegers and besieged. The Franks studied the structure of the walls and fortifications which they found difficult to breach, while the Muslims took a good look, 'for future use', at the siege engines and artillery which had been constructed in the field of battle. All this notwithstanding, neither side immediately initiated changes. More than a decade would pass before the Muslims began to use heavy artillery when conducting a siege. Until then they maintained their traditional methods of shooting arrows, mining, direct assault, or long blockade in their siege warfare, and refrained from the application of heavy artillery.³⁵ The Franks, too, did not incorporate any significant changes in their fortifications until the 1160s.

³³ *Ibid.*, 13, 13, 600–02.

³⁴ 'Intueri libet machinarum formam, castellorum proceritatem, armorum genus, castrorum positionem, principum etiam nomina diligentius investigare cunctaque cum sollicitudine percunctari, ut inde posteris fide plenas certa relatione texere possint historias.' William of Tyre, 13, 14, 602.

³⁵ See, for example, the description of Ilghazi's siege of Ema, Artasium, and Cerep after the battle of Field of Blood, William of Tyre, 12, 11, 559–60; cf. also, 12, 19, 569–70.

Siege tactics: Frankish continuity and Muslim change

In the late 1130s, during the Byzantine siege of Shaizar and the one mounted by Zengi against Montferrand, the differences between Frankish attack and Muslim defence tactics reached their height. Simultaneously, however, first changes began to be felt which would ultimately lead to a complete transformation of the techniques employed by the Franks when attacking and by the Muslims in defence.

The Byzantine military advance to the East in 1137 was accompanied by a huge fleet and logistic support which included advanced siege engines and four-wheeled wagons (in *multitudine curruum et quadrigarum*).³⁶ The Byzantines had already positioned mighty machines and engines during the siege of Antioch, but they brought their true artillery power to bear when besieging Shaizar, Aleppo, and Bazaah.³⁷ Imad al-Din Zengi, the Muslim ruler in the immediate area, tried to come to the aid of the besieged cities by sending reinforcements, but these did not prevent the fall of Bazaah, which suffered greatly from the heavy barrage of the Byzantine siege machines, and later of Atharib too.³⁸ The fall of Bazaah bore more than merely military implications. Muslim sources relate that after the city was taken, 400 of its residents (many of them of the higher classes, including the qadi) out of a total population of 5,800 converted to Christianity. A few years later, the fall of Edessa to the Muslims created a similar effect, but in the opposite direction, as many of its residents adopted the Islamic faith. These two cases are evidence of the intensity of the shock caused by the fall of large and well-fortified cities to the enemy.³⁹

Later, during the siege of Shaizar, the Byzantines deployed sixteen huge catapults around the city (another version puts the number at eighteen) and managed to take the lower city.⁴⁰ Here too the conquest had religious implications. William of Tyre records that after capturing the lower city the emperor put to death all its residents except for those who looked like Christians, 'for there were many in Shaizar who, under the wretched yoke

³⁶ William of Tyre 14, 24, 662–63.

³⁷ Ibn Wasil, 1, 77ff.; Ibn al-Athir, XI, 56.

³⁸ Ibn al-Adim, II, 267, the city was bombarded by artillery.

³⁹ Ibn Wasil, 1, 79; Ibn al-Athir, XI, 57.

⁴⁰ See also Ibn al-Adim, II, 267–68 who claims that the siege was abandoned because of the advance of a Muslim reinforcement.

of slavery, were unjustly oppressed by their infidel masters'.⁴¹ In the early summer of 1138, after failing to take the citadel of Shaizar, the Byzantine emperor abandoned the site, leaving the catapults and siege engines behind. Zengi kept a close watch on the retreating army, captured many of the stragglers, and took all the equipment which the Byzantines had not managed to set afire before retreating.⁴²

The Franks maintained their dependence on heavy machines throughout the period from the 1130s to the 1170s. The siege-fares of the Cave Castle in 1139 and of Wadi Musa [Vallis Moysi] in 1144 show that they refrained from doing so only when the topography was too steep. William of Tyre describes the Cave Castle as being built

on the slope of a very high mountain, the approach to which was practically inaccessible. Above it towered a mighty precipice which reached from the top of the promontory to the depths of the adjacent valley. On one side, a narrow and dangerous path between high projecting cliff and the precipice just described led to the same cave.⁴³

The castle in Wadi Musa too was built in topographical surroundings which made the use of siege engines impossible.

An example *par excellence* of the differences between the siege tactics of the Franks and the Muslims of Damascus in relation to logistics and the construction of siege engines under battle conditions is their joint siege of Baniyas (held by a governor nominated by Zengi) in May 1140. A year earlier, the ruler of Damascus appealed for help to Jerusalem in order to prevent Zengi from capturing Damascus. An alliance was created and the two armies besieged Baniyas together. They divided sectors of the wall between them, preventing entry into and exit from the city, and fought shoulder to shoulder even though each army had had much different experience with weapons, particularly in the employment of mighty siege engines and towers: 'The Franks, who had already bombarded the city with mighty hurling engines . . . called petraries . . . which shook the walls and demolished the buildings within the city itself', suggested building a siege tower. The lack of suitable material forced the joint army to dispatch men 'to Damascus for tall beams of great size, *which long ago had been set*

⁴¹ William of Tyre, 15, 1, 674: 'Nisi forte qui ex eis verbo vel habitu vel quovis signo christiane professionis se esse sectatorm designaret: multos enim fideles habebat et habuerat ab initio civitas illa habitatores . . .'

⁴² Ibn Wasil, 1, 79; William of Tyre, 15, 1, 674.

⁴³ William of Tyre, 15, 6, 681–84; 16, 6, 721–22.

aside especially for such a purpose [my emphasis – R. E.].⁴⁴ Once again, the Muslims had the technical know-how and had even prepared the material in advance, but they did not carry the unassembled machines to the battlefield. When needed, ‘the messengers . . . brought . . . the immense beams of the necessary size and strength. These were quickly dressed by the carpenters and workmen and put together solidly with iron nails.’ Thereupon, the Muslim army had the opportunity to witness the effect of the tower on the local people, an effect which William of Tyre describes as more akin to a war with gods than with men.⁴⁵

Frankish siege tactics continued to develop along the same lines and were most successfully employed during the campaign against Ascalon in 1153. Ascalon was ‘well defended by walls and barbicans, towers, and embankments, and equipped with an incredible quantity of arms and provisions’.⁴⁶ The Franks had at their disposal only a relatively small fleet of fifteen ships, and during the first stages of the siege the number of defenders was twice that of the besiegers, though the latter were well supplied with food and equipment. During Easter, after two months of siege, many pilgrims arrived and changed the balance of power. The king forbade them and their ships to return to their homelands, promising to compensate them financially. Moreover, the Franks also bought some of the ships at high prices and dismantled their masts for use in building siege machines. William tells us:

Workmen were then called in and ordered to build a very high tower of the wood . . . The material which was left from the wooden ships was used to construct hurling engines, which were then placed in strategic positions for battering down the walls. Covered sheds were also made from the same material under protection of which the embankments might be approached and levelled in safety.⁴⁷

After the embankment was lowered by digging and the tower brought to the wall, towering above it, a battle ensued with the defenders in nearby towers. Though they fought bravely with bows and arrows, the latter were unable to prevent the huge siege engine from threatening the city. They did manage to set fire to the huge tower, but an easterly wind pushed the flames back onto the walls, a section of which – between two

⁴⁴ William of Tyre, 15, 9, 685–87.

⁴⁵ ‘ita ut bellum non tam cum hominibus quam cum superis videretur.’ William of Tyre, 15, 9–10, 687–68. For a Muslim description of this siege, see also Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 261.

⁴⁶ William of Tyre, 17, 23, 792.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 17, 24; 30, 793–4; 805.

towers – collapsed, destroying part of the Frankish tower.⁴⁸ Even an Egyptian fleet of seventy ships loaded with men, weapons, and provisions was unable to put an end to the siege, though it did force Gerard of Sidon, commander of the Frankish fleet, to flee ashore.

We see, then, that the Franks continued to employ, time and again, tactics which had proven successful many years earlier: conducting a siege accompanied by the deployment of artillery and siege engines. Thus, for example, the Franks advanced on Shaizar in 1157 in orderly military columns and immediately set up various engines and stone-hurling machines. They did not stop attacking until they took the lower city and looted the homes of its residents.⁴⁹ They refrained from doing so only in cases, such as the siege of the Cave Castle in the Gilead, conquered once again by the Franks in 1157, when topography ruled out the use of artillery. However, some time later, when they reconquered Harim Castle, they did deploy siege engines and artillery as they used to do but, unlike in earlier cases, during the siege of Harim the Franks did not rely solely on their artillery to breach the walls but also dug under the embankment. This was not a case of underground mining, as the Muslims were wont to do, but rather a movement under the cover of protective mobile fortified shelters which hid the diggers from the sight of their enemies.⁵⁰

If we sum up the details provided in this chapter, we can maintain that at least until the late 1150s the Franks successfully employed the siege tactics used during the First Crusade. In most sieges they exploited the superiority of their land forces, which assured them control of advance roads to the besieged sites. Such control enabled the Franks to conduct lengthy sieges, to construct huge, complex siege engines, and to wear down their enemies, whose spirits fell when reinforcements did not materialise. The Franks made almost no use of customary Muslim techniques such as mining under the foundations of the fortifications; indeed, in the few cases in which they tried these methods they proved to be very unskilled in them, leading to the loss of lives.

Chapter 14 will survey the techniques adopted by the Muslims when they initiated siege operations. I shall try to show that these methods and the length of the sieges were dramatically different to those of the Franks.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 17, 25, 794–95; 17, 27, 797–99.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 18, 836–37

⁵⁰ Abu Shama, 1, 287; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 344; William of Tyre, 18, 19, 838–40.

*Development of Muslim siege tactics*THE FIRST DECADES OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY: MINING
AND LIGHT ARTILLERY

During the first four decades of the twelfth century, the Muslims conducted their siege campaigns employing their combined customary techniques of frontal assault, digging under and climbing over the walls. They refrained from bombarding fortifications with heavy artillery, the construction of complex siege towers, and starving the besieged within the city. Their customary tactics took less time to mount, were more efficient, and led to a speedier end to the campaign. The Muslims limited the use of heavy artillery and complex siege engines to defence, deploying such equipment atop the walls of their own cities and fortifications.

In 1104 Fakhr al-Malk ibn 'Amar, the ruler of Tripoli, mounted a surprise attack on 'the pilgrims' castle' which had been built near his city, killing its garrison. The conquerors sacked the castle and set it afire, turning it into a ruin and inflicting deadly wounds on its founder, Raymond of Saint Gilles.¹ One year later, the ruler of Damascus took the castle of Raffaniya by the exact same stratagem. The Muslims launched a surprise attack against the city, killed the garrison which held the Frankish citadel above it, set it afire, and retreated to Homs.² The castle of Al-'Al which al-Qalanisi, described as one of 'those which could not be conquered', was taken by surprise attack late in 1105, and those engaged in its construction – who had not yet completed their work – were killed to the last man.³

¹ Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 64–65; Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 230; Albert of Aachen, 9, 32, 510.

² Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 230; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 68–69.

³ Albert of Aachen, 10, 8, 635–6; Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 229–30; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 71–2. For the Muslims who did not take the castle of Tibnin in 1106 and for another surprise attack on a Frankish castle see Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 74–75; for the frontal attack on the Cave Castle see Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 121. For the attack on Raffaniya in 22 October 1115, see Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 150–51.

A common tactic, also employed in internal struggles among the Muslims themselves, was digging under the fortified walls. It was in this manner, for example, that the Ismaʿiliyya took Apamea in 1104,⁴ while in a struggle that very same year between two rival Muslim princes for control of Mosul the besiegers turned to 'the use of tunnelling and the shock of heavy war engines'.⁵ In many cases, teams of diggers from Aleppo or Khurasan, more experienced than others in tunnelling, were on the scene. Usama Ibn Munqidh has left us a detailed account of one such campaign, conducted by troops from Khurasan. The effort failed, but Usama's description is very informative:

It occurred to me to enter the underground tunnel and inspect it. So I went down in the trench, while the arrows and stones were falling on us like rain, and entered the tunnel. There I was struck with the great wisdom with which the digging was executed. The tunnel was dug from the trench to the bashurah.⁶ On the sides of the tunnel were set up two pillars, across which stretched a plank to prevent the earth above it from falling down. The whole tunnel had such a framework of wood that extended as far as the foundation of the barbican. Then the assailants dug under the wall of the barbican, supported it in its place, and went as far as the foundation of the tower. The tunnel was narrow. It was nothing but a means to provide access to the tower. As soon as they got to the tower, they enlarged the tunnel in the wall of the tower, supported it on timbers and began to carry out, a little at a time, the splinters of stone produced by boring. The floor of the tunnel, on account of the dust caused by the digging, was converted into mud. Having made the inspection, I went on without the troops of Khurasan recognizing me. . .

They then began to cut dry wood and stuff the tunnel with it. Early the next morning they set it on fire. We had just at that time put on our arms and marched, under a great shower of stones and arrows, to the trench in order to make an onslaught on the castle as soon as its tower tumbled over. As soon as the fire began to have its effect, the layers of mortar between the stones began to fall. Then a crack was made. The crack became wider and wider and the tower fell. We had assumed that when the tower would fall we should be able to enter as far as our enemy. But only the outer face of the wall fell, while the inner wall remained intact.⁷

At sunrise, Usama ends his account, he made his way together with the attacking soldiers to their tents. During this retreat, all were hit by the stones hurled at them but they survived.

⁴ Ibn al-ʿAdim, II, 151–52.

⁵ Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 225.

⁶ For the meaning of the word, see ʿAmitai, 1988, 114; Ben Horin, 1951–52, 243–44.

⁷ Usama, trans. Hitti, 102–03.

Usama recorded this description in connection with another Muslim siege, this time conducted against the castle of Cafartab in AH 509 (May 1115–May 1116), in the course of which units of miners from Mosul and Khurasan were employed. He noted that the troops from Khurasan entered the trench and began to dig an underground tunnel. Convinced that they were on the point of perdition, the Franks set fire to the castle. The burning roofs collapsed on the horses, beasts of burden, sheep, swine, and prisoners, all of whom were burnt alive while the Franks themselves gathered behind the castle walls leaving the outer defence to perish.

In a siege mounted against ‘Azaz in January–February 1124 the Muslim besiegers dug tunnels (*nuqub*) under the walls. The tunnels created a situation in which ‘conquest was near’, but then Frankish reinforcements came to the rescue of the besieged, roundly defeating the attackers.⁸ A year later, in 1125, when a Muslim–Frankish alliance besieged Aleppo, psychological warfare tactics were adopted. These included desecration of holy places, torture of prisoners, and starvation.⁹ The city was saved when al-Burusqi (Saif al-Din Aqsunqur) hurried to its rescue. He himself laid siege in the spring of 1125 to ‘Azaz by tunnelling under its citadel. That siege, too, came to an end upon the arrival of Frankish reinforcements.¹⁰

All these cases indicate that the Muslims used to dig quickly under the foundations, hoping for success before the arrival of reinforcements. They realised that should they not topple the fortifications within a few days, Frankish forces rushing to the rescue of the besieged would hold the upper hand. It can be maintained that, at least during the first decades of the twelfth century, Muslim siege campaigns were very short. The importance of reinforcements is even more obvious in cases in which the Franks were unable to come to the aid of a besieged castle or city. On such occasions, as, for example, after the outright defeat of the Franks in the battle on the Field of Blood and the utter destruction of the field armies of the northern principalities, Frankish castles fell one after the other. Utilising the weakness of the Franks’ armies, Ilghazi besieged three of their castles in the vicinity of Antioch. The campaign began by digging under the walls at Cerep, whose commander was absent, most probably being in Antioch at the time. Ilghazi filled the tunnels with timber, intending to set it afire. The garrison, whose morale was low due to the absence of its commander and who were horrified at the thought that the citadel would collapse,

⁸ Ibn al-‘Adim, II, 216.

⁹ Abu Shama, II, 526ff.; Ibn al-‘Adim, II, 224–25.

¹⁰ Ibn al-‘Adim, II, 231.

surrendered to the Muslims. From there Ilghazi moved on to Sardona, where he carried out similar actions, some of which were intended to frighten the defenders while others resulted in actual destruction. Within a few days, those inside this castle surrendered in the same way as in Cerep.¹¹

The Muslim forces preferred tunnelling even when they had artillery at their disposal. In 1123, for instance, when Balak besieged the citadel of Kharput (in which King Baldwin had taken refuge), he ordered his men to prepare catapults with which they could attack it. But even after their construction was completed Balak preferred to mine the foundations. His men began digging, filling the tunnel with inflammable materials; once these were set on fire the tower above the tunnel collapsed noisily. Realising that all hope of reinforcements was lost and fearing that the rest of the citadel would be destroyed in the same fashion, Baldwin surrendered.¹²

The Muslims also applied the same tactics even when they did have the opportunity to erect siege engines and avail themselves of ships for transport. When the Fatimids besieged Jaffa in 1123, they managed to recruit an impressive fleet similar in size to those raised by the Franks when they set siege to Muslim port cities.¹³ Seventy ships launched a coordinated attack on Jaffa from all sides, which endangered the city. The Frankish residents vigorously defended themselves: they fortified the towers and walls, and successfully forced the Muslims to withdraw far from the walls by using arrows, catapults, and rocks hurled from the top of the walls.

The Ascalonites attacking the city of Jaffa, on the other hand, did not build siege engines or heavy artillery; rather, they prepared ladders which were supposed to be tall enough and in sufficient number to mount a coordinated attack against the city walls. Stiff resistance by the Franks prevented the Muslims from positioning their ladders against the wall or from breaking into the city. Since Jaffa's gates were built of wood, without copper or iron plating, the Muslims did manage to set them afire, causing some damage, but in the final tally this attack also failed.¹⁴

Thus, we see that even when a Muslim army was supported by a great fleet of ships which could have provided all its logistical needs, the

¹¹ William of Tyre, 12, 11, 559–560.

¹² Matthew of Edessa, 308–10; William of Tyre, 12, 19, 569–570; Fulcher of Chartres, III, 676–93; Michel the Syrian, III, 211.

¹³ Foster, 1978.

¹⁴ William of Tyre, 11, 24, 531–32.

Muslims did not build siege towers or artillery, preferring to mount a frontal attack on the fortified city or castle and scale its walls. In another description of the siege of Jaffa, William of Tyre notes that it was lifted because the Franks were able to recruit a large army which gathered near Qaqun, from where it set out to relieve the city. More important for our analysis is William's assessment, that the number of defenders was too small to prevent the Muslims from approaching the walls, digging under them, and undermining their foundations in several places. 'If they could have continued the assault on the following day as well, the walls would without question have been battered down', he concludes.¹⁵

In any case, while it would seem *a priori* that preparing artillery was an inseparable part of the procedures preceding any siege, even one mounted by the Muslims, in reality they preferred to try to take the strongholds they besieged quickly by means of tunnelling under the walls or climbing over them, whereas the Franks preferred to mount a much more time-consuming artillery barrage. From the sources at our disposal, it is evident that the Muslims did all in their power to effect a speedy conquest before the arrival of the Frankish reinforcements.¹⁶

Muslim predilection for tunnelling under the walls instead of the construction of siege engines was also evident during their conquest of Baniyas from the Franks towards the end of 1132. Ibn al-Qalanisi notes that the siege began after the Franks violated a treaty they had signed with the Muslims by confiscating large bundles of cotton. The arrival of a Muslim army on 11 December 1132 instilled great fear in the hearts of the city's Frankish defenders. The Muslims advanced towards the walls under the cover of mobile shields which concealed the Khurasan diggers and wall-breakers.¹⁷ The attack began with a tremendous volley of arrows fired at the defenders on the walls, who dared not lift their heads. The diggers began to tunnel under the weakest section of the fortifications, right into the heart of the wall. When the breach was completed, the Muslims broke into the city. They chased down the Franks in every corner of the city, so the latter retreated to the citadel and surrendered. Ibn al-Qalanisi stressed the importance of the speedy conquest, writing that the 'hearts [of the Franks] were filled with fear and terror, and they were greatly astonished

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 12, 21, 604–06.

¹⁶ Cf. the Muslim attempt to capture 'Azaz in 1125: William of Tyre, 13, 16, 604–06. The Muslims prepared the engines and the other equipment but the king arrived and stopped the siege on the city.

¹⁷ Usama, trans. Hitti, 102, Arabic: 73.

that Baniyas should have been taken with such ease and in so short a time in spite of the strength of its fortifications and the number of its defenders'.¹⁸

MUSLIM USE OF ARTILLERY BEFORE AND AFTER THE
SIEGE OF MONTFERRAND

The Muslims already used light artillery during the eleven century. Ibn al-Athir relates, for example, that during the Fatimid siege of Jerusalem in 1098 the besiegers employed about forty catapults which destroyed sections of the walls. The residents of Jerusalem fought back fiercely, and the siege lasted for more than forty days. The Muslims did not have such a lengthy period of time at their disposal during any of the sieges they mounted against the Franks in the first half of the twelfth century. Since Muslim sources do not differentiate between different types of catapults, it is difficult to ascertain which were used by the Fatimids against Jerusalem. However, it is precisely their great number which seems to indicate that we are dealing here with light artillery, i.e., small simple catapults easily assembled. Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge the Fatimids lacked the logistical ability to transport heavy wooden beams from Cairo or the means to cut down trees and to produce such beams at the siege site.¹⁹ When the Muslims did begin to use heavy artillery (in the days of Nur al-Din or Salah al-Din, but even more so during the period of Mamluk rule), they invested much more time and thought in connection with transporting them.

Heavy artillery, for example, played a decisive role in the capture of Arsuf in 1265. The trebuchets were brought ready made from Damascus and were carried shoulder high over difficult stretches of the route.²⁰ During the siege of Saphet in 1266, the trebuchets were brought on camels to Vadum Iacob from where they were carried or dragged, the sultan himself participating in the effort.²¹ Three years later, during the siege of Beaufort in 1268, the beams for the trebuchets were brought from Damascus. The Mamluks deployed at first two trebuchets and twenty-six by the end of the siege. Ibn al-Furat relates that the governor of Egypt had sent a gift of money to help the campaign, which was used to pay the

¹⁸ Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 218, cf. 215–18.

¹⁹ Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 197–98.

²⁰ Ibn al Furat, II, 73–80; Kennedy, 1994, 108–09.

²¹ Ibn al Furat, II, 88–95.

crews of trebuchets in his name.²² It may be assumed, therefore, that the artillery used by the Fatimids during the siege of Jerusalem was not of an advanced trebuchet type, whose operation called for large sums of money and special means.

William of Tyre claims that during the Muslim siege of Jaffa in 1102 the Fatimid army employed artillery, mobile shelters, and ladders built of excellent materials.²³ His chronicle was apparently written during the eighth decade of the twelfth century, while contemporary Muslim accounts make no mention of the use of artillery in this campaign.²⁴ As for the siege conducted by Ilghazi in 1122 against Zardana, Muslim sources relate that the attackers brought four catapults to bear to help capture the outer wall, but Frankish reinforcements rushing to the aid of the besieged prevented it from falling into Muslim hands.²⁵

Another early case of Muslim use of artillery was during the civil war in 1132 between the heirs of Taj al-Muluk, in which a siege was mounted against Baalbek. The attackers employed catapults only after the city was completely surrounded, and only then did the defenders surrender.²⁶

The episode of the Muslim siege of Montferrand Castle (Qal'at Barin) – located above Raffaniya in the vicinity of Tripoli – in July 1137 appears to have been a turning point in the history of Muslim sieges of Frankish strongholds. It began with a siege of more than usual length. The king of Jerusalem, Fulk of Anjou, set out at the head of a well-equipped force to aid the castle, which was in dire need of food and supplies.²⁷ Zengi, who foresaw the arrival of reinforcements, launched a surprise attack against the column, taking captive the count of Tripoli and his leading knights. The king managed to take refuge within Montferrand, but all the supplies he brought with him, including horses, beasts of burden, and artillery, fell to Zengi's force. The king and his men did not alleviate the difficult condition of the defenders, who were already suffering from a lack of food and water before their arrival.²⁸ They sent messengers bearing a call for urgent help to the prince of Antioch, the count of Edessa, and the patriarch

²² *Ibid.*, 108–12.

²³ William of Tyre, 10, 21 (22), 479: 'Crates, scalas et varii generis machinas ex electa lignorum materia contextentes'. For the battle, see also Fulcher of Chartres, II, 444–55; Albert of Aachen, 9, 7–12, 595–97; Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 213–16.

²⁴ For Muslim descriptions of this siege see Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 55; Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 214.

²⁵ Ibn al-'Adim, II, 204.

²⁶ Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 214.

²⁷ William of Tyre, 14, 25, 663–65; Ibn Wasil, I, 72–74.

²⁸ William of Tyre, 14, 26, 665–67.

of Jerusalem.²⁹ These three quickly set out to rescue the defenders, for the fate of the besieged city was now in their hands.

From William of Tyre's description of the siege of Montferrand we are able to conclude that this was the first time the Muslims employed artillery non-stop.

The very walls shook under the impulse of his mighty engines. Millstones and huge rocks hurled from the machines fell into the midst of the citadel, shattered the houses within, and caused intense fear to the refugees there. Great fragments of rock and all kinds of whirling missiles were hurled with such violence against them that here was no longer any place of security within the walls where the feeble and wounded might be hidden. Everywhere was danger, everywhere hazard; everywhere the specter of frightful death hovered before their eyes.

According to Ibn al-ʿAdim, Zengi deployed no less than ten catapults to hurl stones day and night.³⁰ We cannot say with certainty that Zengi, for the first time in Muslim warfare, used artillery which his forces had brought with them; it is more reasonable to assume that he also used the engines which the king had transported on his way north. Zengi, fearing the arrival of reinforcements and particularly wary of the Byzantine emperor's power, initiated negotiations. The defenders, unaware that help was nearing the castle, agreed to capitulate under relatively good terms: the king and his entire entourage would be allowed to leave and all prisoners would be freed in return for the castle.³¹

After Montferrand, the Muslims made more frequent use of catapults during sieges. For example, when Zengi besieged Baalbek, which was under the control of Damascus, early in 1139, he deployed no less than fourteen catapults which bombarded the city day and night, until its defenders 'were on the verge of ruin' and surrendered when the wall was breached. A small group of Turkish soldiers continued to defend the tower, but were finally taken captive and crucified.³² Despite these cases, Muslim use of artillery bombardments was still relatively rare; they

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ William of Tyre, 14, 28, 667–69: 'Sanguinus interea, obsessos continuis urgens molestiis, menia tormentis quatiens, machinis molares et saxa ingentia iaculatoriis in medium contorquens presidium, domos prosternit interius non sine multa inclusorum formidine: tantis enim eos cautes violenter inmissi, contorta omnimodorum telorum genera obprimebant angustiis, ut iam intra muros nullus tutus ad occultandos saucios et debiels inveniretur locus.' According to Ibn Wasil, 1, 73, the Franks ate the beasts of burden; according to Ibn al ʿAdim, 11, 261, the siege ended only in mid-September 1137.

³¹ Ibn al-Qalanisi, 242–43, describes the siege in a similar way, noting that the Franks paid the Muslims 50,000 dinars while acknowledging Muslim suzerainty on the place.

³² Ibn al-Qalanisi, 253–55.

preferred their traditional, generally efficient, tactics: digging under the walls, filling them with inflammable materials, and setting the tunnel on fire.

Even during the joint siege of Baniyas, described in detail in Chapter 13, the Muslims did not transport heavy wooden beams from Damascus, where they had been prepared, to the site of battle. These necessary materials were brought in by the Franks who later also constructed a siege tower higher than the walls. The view from that tower probably made the Muslims aware of the advantages of bringing heavy wooden beams with them and of employing carpenters and craftsmen in the field of battle.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEEDY CAPTURE OF ENEMY CASTLES:
THE CONQUEST OF EDESSA

More intensive use of artillery by the Muslims did not significantly change the balance of power in the field. They still feared the arrival of Frankish reinforcements and preferred to avoid a frontal battle. The Muslims were victorious only when the Frankish army was still far away or for other reasons was unable to come to the rescue of the besieged defenders. The castles which fell to the Muslim forces were generally relatively distant from the Frankish centres of power and concentrations of reinforcements.

This is also true in relation to the siege and conquest of the county of Edessa in December 1144. All the written sources agree that Zengi took advantage of the fact that Joscelin II, the count of Edessa, was absent at the time. Zengi's first step was to completely close off Edessa and starve its residents.³³ Though the city was fortified, its residents, who had little faith in their own fortifications and the reduced garrison, despatched a desperate message to the Kingdom of Jerusalem. 'For', says William of Tyre, 'walls, towers, and ramparts avail but little if there are none to man them.'³⁴

Zengi, fearing the arrival of reinforcements, used all means at his disposal – arrows, catapults (no details of their type are provided), and digging under the foundations to complete the conquest as fast as possible. Even so, the Muslims depended more on tunnelling than on bombardment:

³³ William of Tyre, 16, 4, 718; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 266; Ibn al-ʿAdim, 278.

³⁴ William of Tyre, 16, 4, 719.

[During the siege Zengi] set up mangonels against [the walls of Edessa], and while these unceasingly bombarded the city . . . the men of Khurasan and of Aleppo who were familiar with the technique of sapping, and bold in carrying it out, set to work and made saps at a number of places which they selected as suitable for their operations . . . until they reached below the foundations of the bastions of the wall.

They filled the tunnel with timber and waited for Zengi's instructions. Zengi entered the tunnel, expressed his admiration, and gave the order to set the timber ablaze. Subsequently, the wall collapsed and Edessa fell to the besiegers on Saturday, 14 December 1144.³⁵ Zengi devoted the entire following year to the construction of catapults and other war engines.³⁶ The Franks, for their part, accused the local leadership – even the city's archbishop – of skimping on expenditures for defence and not mobilising a sufficient number of soldiers to defend Edessa until the arrival of reinforcements.³⁷

The Franks, convinced that a siege in which siege engines and towers were not employed was doomed to failure, did not give up. In 1146, more than a year after the fall of Edessa, Joscelin, in collaboration with residents within the city, managed to sneak soldiers inside and take the lower city. The Muslim garrison fled and took refuge in the citadel. It was this garrison which in the end contributed to the failure of the Frankish attempt. When Zengi surrounded Edessa anew, the Franks, who feared a siege and preferred to meet the enemy on the field of battle, tried to break out of the city; during this attempt the garrison hit them from behind and Zengi from the front.³⁸ The Frankish sources blamed Count Joscelin for failing to bring with him machines, or construction materials for such machines, and therefore for the failure of this second attempt.³⁹

³⁵ Ibn al-ʿAdim, ii, 278–79; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 267.

³⁶ Ibn al-ʿAdim, 281, Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 270, provides us with a very similar description to that of Imad al-Din: There [were] . . . reports about preparing a prodigious number of mangonels and appliances of war and materials required for the subjugation of strong and impregnable places of every kind.

³⁷ William of Tyre, 16, 4, 721, describes Hugo, the archbishop of the city, who was killed during the battle: 'Although he was said to have amassed great riches, which he might have used to pay troops for defending the city, he preferred, like a miser, to store up his wealth rather than to consider his perishing people.'

³⁸ William of Tyre, 16, 15, 735: 'It would be better to encounter the enemy and force a path to safety with the sword than to endure a siege.' [Nam satius esse non dubitant cum hostibus temptare congredi et gladii iter aperire ut saluti consulatur, quam obsidionem sustinere . . .]

³⁹ 'maxime cum neque machinas neque unde fieri possent materiam aut secum detulisset aut in tota reperisset urbe . . .' WT, 16, 14, p. 734.

The Muslims gradually made more frequent use of artillery to capture fortified castles and cities. Immediately after Zengi was murdered while besieging Qal'at Ja'bar, the ruler of Damascus freed from the fear of Zengi, set out to try and take Baalbek with the help of siege engines and artillery.⁴⁰

Though Nur al-Din, Zengi's successor, employed more artillery from time to time, it would seem that, like his predecessors, he preferred to rely on the traditional tactics of tunnelling under the foundations and penetrating the strongholds by cunning. In 1148, for example, he was able to conquer the castle of 'Arima by tunnelling,⁴¹ and in March 1154 gained control of the citadel of Damascus by scaling its walls, combined with support from within.⁴²

THE IMPORTANCE OF REINFORCEMENTS: THE SIEGE OF BANIYAS, 1157

An example *par excellence* of a Muslim siege campaign which combined the use of artillery with tunnelling (with preference given to the latter) while meticulously choosing the most propitious time and place (when it was most difficult for the Frankish army to extend support to the attacked, and as far away as possible from the Franks' centres of power), was the siege of Baniyas in 1157. William of Tyre describes Baniyas as a true frontier city, lying within the confines of the enemy's country and very close to it [in *confinio hostium posita eisque valde contermina*], so that no one could approach or leave the city without danger unless in a strong company or by following secret ways.

The city's ruler decided to share his control of Baniyas with the Hospitallers, who despatched a large convoy of provisions, arms, and troops which was ambushed and roundly defeated. Nur al-Din tried to exploit this success and take the city before the king of Jerusalem could send additional help. '[Nur al-Din] had his engines of war moved to the place . . . the forces were placed in a circle around it and siege operations begun . . . [He stormed the city] with the machines and hurling engines and at the same time kept up a steady, incessant shower of arrows which gave the besieged no respite.'⁴³ The defenders tried to

⁴⁰ Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 273.

⁴¹ Ibn al-'Adim, II, 293.

⁴² Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 318–19.

⁴³ William of Tyre, 18, 12, 827; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 333–34 and Abu Shama, I, 268–72; at the same time a host of Turkmen besieged Hunin.

mount a counterattack, but since there were no posterns they had to open wide the city gate for their sortie. When it failed, they tried to retreat into the city but 'the gate could not be shut . . . because the pressure of the crowd trying to enter was so great'. The Muslims succeeded in taking the city and forcing the defenders to retreat to the citadel.⁴⁴

The Franks were on the point of capitulation, but the king, who set out in great haste to rescue the besieged, drew near. Taken by surprise, Nur al-Din fled, fearing to face the king and his men in combat. Before retreating, however, he ordered his men to set fire to the city which he had taken by assault. When the king arrived,

from the neighboring cities and the whole region, he summoned masons and all who had some experience in the art of building. The walls and towers were thoroughly repaired and the ramparts renewed within the circuit of the walls, the houses of the inhabitants were rebuilt and the public buildings restored to their original condition.⁴⁵

This, however, did not put an end to the campaign. Nur al-Din laid an ambush for the king and his troops near Vadum Iacob, jumping upon the force when it made its way back to Jerusalem. Many of the knights were killed in battle, while others were taken captive.

The king, who managed to extricate himself and some of his men, immediately prepared to continue the campaign, for Nur al-Din, wishing to exploit his unexpected success, had hurried back to besiege Baniyas once again, probably believing that the king would be unable to recover quickly from the blow he had been dealt. Once again Nur al-Din strategically deployed his siege engines, and the rocks they propelled undermined the towers and weakened the walls. But King Baldwin III, who had managed to gather all the soldiers who survived the disastrous defeat at Vadum Iacob and also to recruit the princes of Tripoli and Antioch, set out once again. This episode in the campaign against Baniyas ended like the previous one: the Franks rushed to the aid of the besieged and set up their camp not far from the city of Baniyas, leading

⁴⁴ According to Ibn al Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 334–35, the Muslims forced their way inside the city by undermining the walls: 'a carrier-pigeon from the camp at Baniyas on Tuesday . . . announcing the capture of the city of Baniyas by the sword after four hours had passed of this same Tuesday, when, the sap having been finished and fire thrown into it, the tower which had been undermined fell down, the troops forced their way in through the gap, plied the sword in slaying its inhabitants and plundered its contents. See also, Abu Shama, I, 268–72.

⁴⁵ William of Tyre, 18, 13, 829–30; Muslim sources insist that the king did not rebuild the city, see Ibn al Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 334–35 and Abu Shama, I, 270–72.

Nur al-Din, apprehensive of face-to-face confrontation, to lift the siege and withdraw to Damascus.⁴⁶

What emerges from the detailed description of the siege of Baniyas in 1157 is that its fortifications were insufficient to withstand a siege and that its defenders were completely dependent upon forces coming to their rescue. Furthermore, reinforcements for a place so distant from Jerusalem and so close to Damascus could not be taken for granted. Nur al-Din was twice able to ambush advancing relief columns and destroy them. Such a state of affairs is characteristic of frontier areas dependent upon help from the interior of the kingdom and under threat of repeated enemy attack.

One year later, in 1158, Nur al-Din placed under siege the Cave Castle, also in the Gilead, on the frontier of the Latin Kingdom. The defenders agreed to tentative conditions for surrender – i.e., that should help not be forthcoming within ten days they would capitulate – and in the meantime sent the king an urgent request for help. The monarch hurried to their rescue, joined battle with the besiegers and defeated their leader Shirkuh near the Jordan River, thus lifting the siege from the castle. Before returning to Jerusalem, he supplied it with men, food, and arms.⁴⁷

Nur al-Din attempted to take additional Frankish castles. In 1162 he gathered his army in Aleppo and set out to besiege Harim Castle. Since this stronghold was ‘full of many brave warriors, both infantry and cavalry’, it did not surrender to Nur al-Din, even forcing him to beat a hasty retreat.⁴⁸ He suffered yet another rout when trying to conquer Crac des Chevaliers (Hisn al-Akrad). His men, in their tents at noon, were surprised to see the cross carried by the Franks beyond the hill atop of which Hisn al-Akrad was situated. Nur al-Din escaped from the Frankish forces (accompanied by Byzantine soldiers) by the skin of his teeth.⁴⁹

In summarising the details provided in this chapter, we may say that the Muslims, like their Frankish adversaries, were highly conservative in relation to their siege tactics, at least until the late 1150s. In almost all cases they preferred mining the foundations of the walls, or attempting frontal attack by scaling them; not once did they base their strategy on only the construction of complex siege engines or towers. It would seem that such

⁴⁶ William of Tyre, 18, 15, 832–33.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 18, 21, 841.

⁴⁸ Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 525.

⁴⁹ Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 530–32 says that the limbs of the horse were still tied up when Nur al-Din attempted to escape. One of his servants cut the ropes and was killed, but Nur al-Din succeeded in fleeing.

conservative tendencies resulted from the situation on the ground: Frankish superiority in the field and the fact that Muslim armies tended to avoid lengthy sieges. The Muslim commanders had generally no more than a week to complete the conquest, or at most ten days if we take into account the tentative surrender agreement at the Cave Castle. Frankish reinforcements generally arrived on the scene within a week, putting an end to the siege. Whenever such reinforcements could not be expected, like after the Franks were roundly defeated in the battle of the Field of Blood, their castles fell to the Muslims like ripe fruit from a tree.

*The appearance of the concentric castles*MUSLIM OFFENSIVE: THE CAPTURE OF HARIM,
THE CAVE CASTLE, AND BANIYAS¹

The Muslim offensive commenced in 1163 while the Frankish army was still invading Egypt and was preoccupied with a siege of Bilbays. It was then that Nur al-Din 'went to the very edge of their country طرف بلدهم to prevent them from going out'.² The attack on the Frankish rear produced very impressive results: Nur al-Din took Harim and attacked Baniyas. In the siege of Harim, Nur al-Din employed artillery and did not flee the Franks even when they advanced towards him. He did not dare face them in frontal combat, though, preferring instead the old ruse of staging a retreat, followed by a surprise attack upon the Frankish reinforcements, which were unable to release the besieged city.³

Baniyas, an important city not far from Damascus, was a much greater prize. Nur al-Din had already besieged it in previous years and was well acquainted with the weakness of its fortifications.⁴ The Franks, too, were aware that Baniyas was a frontier city, and William of Tyre even noted that such was its condition in biblical times too, when the borders of the Land of Israel stretched from Dan – not far from Baniyas – in the north to Beersheba in the south. William seems to have realised that a frontier was evolving in the north-east of the kingdom and that the remoteness of this region from the centre of the country posed a great danger to its residents.

William provides a chronicle of the events which led to the fall of Baniyas. He describes the siege, the artillery bombardment, and the efforts of sappers to undermine the foundations of the towers, but also presents

¹ This chapter includes important contributions of my students Yigal Shapira-Shvar and Kate Sara Rephael, to whom my grateful thanks are due.

² Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 535.

³ *Ibid.*, 538; Ibn al-ʿAdim, II, 319; William of Tyre, 19, 9, 874–75.

⁴ William of Tyre, 19, 10, 876–77; Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 541.

the absence of the city's lord (who was with the king in Egypt) and its bishop among the reasons which led to its capture. Yet, the key cause of defeat in William's opinion was the treachery of the defenders: 'It is rumored further that [the commander of the city, Walter de Quesnoy] in conspiracy with a priest named Roger, a canon of that church, treacherously accepted a bribe in return for effecting the surrender.'⁵

William provides a similar analysis of the fall of the cave castle (Cavea de Tyrun) in the Mount of Lebanon to a Muslim force commanded by Shirkuh. Once again, Nur al-Din exploited the site's proximity to his own base of power and its remoteness from that of the Franks to mount a surprise attack, concealing his intentions and preventing them from rushing to the aid of the castle.⁶ Shirkuh, writes William, 'seized a fortress belonging to the Christians near Sidon suddenly and without warning'. In this case too William ascribes the fall of the Cave Castle, one which was deemed impossible to capture, to the treachery of its defenders, who surrendered it to the Muslims and consequently fled to an enemy country. Their commander, he informs us, was seized by the Franks and was hanged.⁷

It was also William's judgement that the fall of yet a third castle, the Cave Castle in Gilead, should be put down to an act of treachery and not to the Muslims' military superiority or their ability to attack without warning. In this case too he notes that this was indeed a castle located at the extremity of the kingdom, 'on the borders of Arabia', and that it was taken by storm, but he attributes its fall to the treachery of twelve Templar knights who abandoned it, for which they were later executed by the king.⁸

There is no doubt that William of Tyre, who had access to the official records of the kingdom, did not invent these reasons for the almost simultaneous capitulation of three important castles. The execution of the traitors and William's noting the names of the highest ranking among them indicates that not only were they put on trial, but there was a consensus of opinion that the fall of the castles was the outcome of treasonous acts. William himself does not express surprise at the coincidence in which three dramatic cases of treachery occurred in such a short period of time, in such similar places, and in situations so resembling one another with respect to the non-availability of the kingdom's army.

⁵ William of Tyre, 19, 10, 877.

⁶ Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 545-46.

⁷ William of Tyre, 19, 11, 878-79.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 879.

Accusations of treachery apparently came to an end at the time of the successful Muslim incursion of 1167, during which Nur al-Din conquered additional Frankish strongholds. The campaign began in the vicinity of Crac des Chevaliers (Hisn al-Akrad), where his forces caused severe havoc and took captives; it continued with the siege of 'Arka and the conquest of Jabala, and reached its peak in the capture of the castles of 'Arima and Safita and later in the conquest of Hunin, 'one of their [i.e., the Franks] most fortified places. When they [the Muslims] approached, the Franks fled from this castle after setting it afire'. Nur al-Din reached Hunin only a day after it was abandoned and destroyed its walls. He intended to advance against Beirut as well, but discontent within the army forced him to forego the continuation of his campaign and return home.⁹

William of Tyre makes no mention at all of the shameful capitulation of Hunin and the fall of the other northern castles in that same period of time. Was this because he no longer took an interest in the fate of the castles? Was his interest now focused solely on the campaign in Egypt? Whatever the reason, William and the Frankish leadership no longer attributed the fall of the castles to acts of treachery on the part of their defenders. There are many independent testimonies indicating that the Frankish leaders began to understand the military significance of the fall of Baniyas and the northern castles, leading them to appeal for help to European rulers.¹⁰ As we shall see below, this long series of defeats also led to the construction of a new type of castle – the concentric one.

SIEGE CAMPAIGNS IN EGYPT

As Nur al-Din and his forces were demonstrating that without reinforcements the Franks' frontier castles could not withstand Muslim sieges, the Frankish forces repeatedly invaded Egypt in an attempt to conquer the coastal cities of Alexandria and Damietta. Though they employed all the military technology in their arsenal, these proved to be at least partially unsuccessful because the Muslims, for their part, also invested great sums on the construction of war machines (*ad constituendas machinas*) to

⁹ Baha al-Din, 31; Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 551; for a similar event which occurred after the fall of Baghras in 1188, when Salah al-Din wished to besiege Antioch, the determination of his troops, especially those from far away, had weakened and their only wish was to return to their countries and rest from fighting. See Abu Shama, ed. *RHC*, 380–81.

¹⁰ Phillips, 1996, 140–224.

defend the city.¹¹ The siege of Alexandria, in 1167, began with a blockade which prevented supplies and food from reaching the city's residents and was later continued by the construction of a siege tower and artillery bombardments.

The besieging host . . . collected an immense number of masts, summoned craftsmen and carpenters, and caused them to erect a tower of great height [*castellum erigunt mire altitudinis*] from whose top the entire city could be surveyed. Machines called petraries which hurl forth enormous stones of great weight were also placed in strategic positions around the walls. From these, almost incessantly, were hurled immense stones of great weight, which shattered the walls and terrified the people almost beyond endurance.¹²

This campaign did not end in victory for the Franks. The king ordered his men to set fire to the siege engines and retreat. More than likely, he feared that local Muslims would learn from observation how to build siege engines and use them elsewhere.¹³

Two years later, in 1169, the Franks began a siege of Damietta. The Muslims, aware of the Franks' appeal for aid to European rulers following the capitulation of Baniyas and Hunin, considered the present siege to be one outcome of that appeal. Salah al-Din meticulously prepared for the defence of Damietta, expending about a million Egyptian dinars from the treasury of the Fatimid caliph.

The Arabic sources inform us that Nur al-Din once again exploited the absence of the army of the Franks from the kingdom to attack their northern settlements. This, according to the Muslim chroniclers, was what led the Franks to lift the siege of Damietta after only fifty days.¹⁴ These same sources describe the equipment used by the Franks during the siege: giant catapults, siege towers, huge ballistae, and other siege engines. When this siege too ended unsuccessfully, the Franks once again set fire to the catapults as they retreated in December 1169, though the other siege engines apparently fell into Muslim hands.

Muslim interest in the acquisition of Frankish siege technology is manifested in a treatise which was written sometime at the beginning of the 1170s by a certain Murda ibn Murda al-Tarsusi for the private library of Salah al-Din. The treatise includes detailed descriptions of arms which

¹¹ Part of the money was spent for charity, and the welfare of the wounded Egyptian soldiers and the soldiers themselves. See William of Tyre, 19, 26, 905.

¹² *Ibid.*, 19, 26, 901–05, esp. 903–04.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 19, 32, 909.

¹⁴ Ibn Wasil, 1, 179–83; Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, 568–70.

were not in common use by the Muslim armies and shorter descriptions of better known arms.¹⁵ Thus we have detailed descriptions of Frankish arbalists, siege engines, and even siege towers – a device which was never before utilised by the Muslim armies in their campaigns against the Franks. The author refers in his description to the arms and engines which were built by the Alexandrian artisan Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan ibn al-Abraqi al-Iskandarani. Abu'l-Hasan had the opportunity to study the construction of Frankish siege towers, as well as many other Frankish heavy siege engines, during the unsuccessful Frankish siege of his own city of Alexandria in 1167, or during their siege of Damietta in 1169 or of Alexandria in 1174. The Franks, who were well aware of the Muslim ability and willingness to imitate siege engines and military devices, set fire to their own machines after any attempt to capture the cities.¹⁶ Abu'l-Hasan, however, had enough opportunities to study the Frankish machines and then copy them, and during the 1180s we hear of the application of Muslim siege engines against a Frankish castle.

In the sieges they mounted during the late 1160s, however, the Franks continued to employ their previous tactics: they planned lengthy campaigns, relying on superior land forces and on the logistical support of large and strong fleets. The European fleets took care of the regular supply of provisions and equipment and helped in the construction of the sophisticated machines used by the Franks to bombard the cities they were besieging. But the fortunes of the Franks were reversed during this decade, for though they continued to employ all their usual tactics – raising great fleets and mobilising the necessary funds, manpower, and equipment – they failed to take Alexandria and Damietta.

The Muslims prepared themselves well for these campaigns, basing the preparation on the study of Frankish machines, and on spending large sums on the construction of siege engines and artillery of their own. Furthermore, though the Franks were able to conduct massive and complex sieges in Egypt, they were unable to provide a remedy for the Muslim threat against the frontiers of their own kingdom which, with surprising ease, ended in the fall of large and important castles such as those of Baniyas and Hunin. As noted, until the middle of the decade the Franks tended to attribute these defeats to acts of treachery on the part of the defenders, but they soon came to understand that this was not the true cause and that a direct correlation existed between the ability of a castle to

¹⁵ For extensive extracts from the text, see Tarsusi, ed. Cahen.

¹⁶ See Abu-Shama, 457; William of Tyre, 20, 15–16, 929–33.

hold out and the might of the land forces defending it. A strong and readily available force, determined and quick to respond, could speedily come to the aid of a besieged castle, even if it was defended by relatively weak fortifications.

When the army lost strength, whether because the enemy became stronger, or due to a temporary or lengthy lack of manpower, or as a result of the Frankish expeditionary force's campaign in Egypt, the castles no longer fulfilled their objectives and the need arose for mightier fortifications. In such cases, massive stones could substitute for manpower, while investment of money could make defeats more moderate and reduce the loss of life. Nur al-Din and Salah al-Din knew how to exploit the Franks' shortage of manpower and the advanced technology of their days to launch successful offensives. The Muslims began to use heavier artillery and exploit the alacrity of their tunnellers to gain victories and conquests. Gradually, the balance of power between Franks and Muslims, both in offence and defence, became more even, so much so that the Franks, whose army could no longer defend the castles, had to adopt a new tactic and construct fortifications of a new type.

CRUSADER FRONTIERS AND CONCENTRIC CASTLES

From the late 1160s onwards, the Franks began to employ a new technology of fortification, generally termed 'concentric castles'. These castles were intended to withstand Muslim sieges for a lengthier period of time (until that decade they generally lasted no more than a week or ten days) and to more successfully withstand bombardment by heavy artillery and tunnelling under the foundations of the walls. Their name indicates that most of them were surrounded by two or three lines of fortifications; however, the system of defence that formed the basis of this new conception was much more complex, simultaneously meeting challenges posed by different types of warfare.

Pringle stresses that castles of the new type enabled switching from the conventional tactics of passive defence to more active defensive actions which also included counter-attacks against the enemy arrayed outside the walls. He also noted that the concentric castles enabled the defenders to continue fighting even after the fall of the outermost wall. Pringle defined a concentric castle as one having several basic components: a higher inner keep; a lower surrounding wall (*enceinte*) which enabled the defenders to fight simultaneously from the inner keep and the *enceinte*; a pathway for the soldiers (*chemin de ronde*) along which were rows of arrow slits, usually

on more than one level; towers protruding from the external wall into the moat; and machicolations which defended the upper sections of the wall. What Pringle seems to be claiming is that the concentric castle became a sort of keep.¹⁷ By this definition, he widened the other intuitive definition which prevailed at the time, and which tended to term every castle surrounded by more than one line of defence as a 'concentric castle.' Yet even he did not refer to the military challenges which led the Franks to develop and internalise this new and very expensive technology.

Already in the early 1960s, Howard Colvin suggested a different approach by means of which the development of the new type of fortifications could be analysed, by pointing to the functions filled by the concentric castles and the relative advantages they provided. For example, when discussing wider and deeper moats he wrote: 'It was mainly by the systematic employment of . . . all the most advanced techniques of fortification . . . [which became an] integrated whole . . . that the enemy [was] forced to keep his distance: hence the new emphasis on the widening and deepening of castle ditches. . .'¹⁸

My interpretation, presented in the following pages, adopts Colvin's functional outlook and is based on the assertion that castles, just like other military technologies, develop out of a dialogue with the enemy's tactics, and that the concentric castles were indeed meant as a response to the military challenges threatening the very existence of the earlier type of fortifications. An analysis of Muslim siege tactics of the 1160s indicates that the concentric castles provided solutions for four major weak spots in the earlier Frankish defences.

MUSLIM SIEGE TACTICS OF THE 1160S

Muslim adoption of heavy artillery and siege towers

The Muslims began the regular employment of heavy artillery for offensive purposes as early as in the late 1130s. Over the years, the use of such equipment became more frequent, though they still preferred traditional tactics such as sapping and frontal assaults. Towards the end of the twelfth century they also adopted the use of siege engines which directly threatened the Frankish castles. The concentric castles were built to

¹⁷ Pringle, in Lawrence, 1988; Héliot, 1974, 43–58; Kennedy, 1994, 112.

¹⁸ Colvin, 1963, 78–79.

withstand Muslim heavy artillery bombardments and so that their defenders could also reply with a more effective bombardment of their own.

Intensive Muslim firing of arrows

The Muslims enjoyed immense superiority over the Franks in the employment of archers throughout their entire period of conflict in the East. The concentric castles were also intended to provide better protection against the arrows fired by the Muslim archers which, though less severely damaging than artillery bombardments, nevertheless made it difficult for the defenders to conduct an orderly battle, treat their wounded, and man the towers. The new fortifications also provided better opportunities for those within the walls to shoot back at the archers outside.

Muslim sapping technologies

The Muslim troops from Aleppo and Khurasan, so proficient in tunnelling under foundations, were responsible for the fall of many Frankish castles. This forced the planners of the new type of fortifications to seek ways and means to prevent the Muslims from digging tunnels under the walls, filling them with inflammable materials, and setting them afire.

Lengthier Muslim sieges

The gradual increase in strength of the Muslim land forces, coupled with a similar decrease in power of their Frankish counterparts as well as the absence of the kingdom's army during the invasion of Egypt, enabled a significant change in the length of Muslim sieges. If in the 1150s a Muslim siege rarely lasted more than a week, generally coming to an end with the arrival of Frankish reinforcements, in the seventies and eighties of that century they were conducted for months, sometimes even years (as in the case of Karak, Shubak, and Belvoir). Preparing for a lengthy siege forced the lords of the castles to create stores of food, water, and arms, and to have at hand a garrison large enough to withstand lengthy siege campaigns.

Most of the older castles were now outdated by these developments in the Muslim tactics of warfare and siege. To meet the new conditions the Franks made substantial changes in each component of their fortifications, and also in their combined functioning as one integral defensive system. These changes included improved passive defence measures,

among them higher and thicker external defences, deeper ditches, and larger stockpiles of food and water. Preparations for active defence included the construction of platforms for the artillery, outposts for archers, pathways inside the walls making the outposts more accessible, and the creation of posterns in the towers enabling the defenders to rush outside the walls and attack the enemy's artillery. It is at times difficult to differentiate between improvements meant to enhance the passive or active defence measures of the castles; in most cases they complement one another. We shall now devote a separate discussion to each component.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FRANKISH CONCENTRIC CASTLES

Thicker walls

Thicker walls and the use of larger stones in the construction of the walls' external layers no doubt enhanced the ability of the new type of castle to withstand artillery and siege engines. Thus, throughout the entire twelfth century the outer fortifications of Crusader castles continuously increased in width. The thickness of the walls in fortresses which the Franks took over from their previous Muslim owners was about 2 m: in Kefar Lam (Cafarlet), for instance, they were 1.7 m wide, while in the pre-Crusader castle at Arsuf their width was 2.2 m. In the second-generation Frankish castles (those which preceded the 'concentric' type), the width of a typical wall was generally between 2.5 and 3 m. Some examples are: Beit Shean, 2.3–2.5 m; Belmont (the inner wall), 2.6 m; Aqua Bella, 2.2–2.5 m; Mirabel, 2.5–2.9; Bayt 'Itab, 2.75 m; Burj al-Malih, 2.3 m; Ar-Ram, 2.5 m; and Latrun (the inner wall), 2.8m. At Mi'ilya (Castellum Regis), constructed in 1160 as one of the last 'second-generation' Frankish castles, the width of the walls ranged from 2.8 to 3 m.

The walls built from the late 1160s onwards were substantially thicker than the earlier ones: 4 m wide at Belvoir; 4.3 m at Vadum Iacob; measurement of the only section of the external wall excavated at Belmont produced a result of 5 m; and a similar width was measured in the northern wall of Karak. Fortifications erected during the thirteenth century were of even larger dimensions than those of the third-generation castles: at 'Athlit, the width of the outermost wall reached 8 m. The external wall (not including the *glacis*) at Crac des Chevaliers was more than 4 m wide, as were the walls of the concentric castle at Arsuf.¹⁹

¹⁹ Roll *et al.*, 2000, 18–31.

The walls were much wider at the base than at their summit; this was done to present greater difficulty to sappers, but also to simplify construction. The difference between base and summit was sometimes as much as 50 per cent. The ashlar used for the outer layers of the new Frankish walls were much thicker than the stones used for the inner layer: thus, in Vadum Iacob, the depth of the outer stones was of about 0.6 m (in average) whereas the average depth of the inner walls was of about 0.4 m in average.

The relatively great width of the new type of walls was described in multiples of 'cavalrymen riding side by side'. Thus, the thickness of 'Athlit's walls was noted as being wide enough to enable fully armed knights to mount or descend the stairs within the wall, and when the Mamluk sultan ordered the destruction of the walls of Tripoli, 'the width of its wall was three mounted cavalrymen'.²⁰ The size of the stones used to build the new type of walls was so great that the builders of the wall at 'Athlit made use of 'ashlars of such size that each stone could barely be transported on a wagon drawn by two oxen'.²¹

Higher fortifications

Raising the height of the external fortifications was intended to reduce, or even totally prevent, damage to buildings within the walls from stones hurled by catapults. From the detailed descriptions of the siege of Tyre, especially those of William of Tyre who, by dint of his office and place of residence, was well acquainted with the city's defences, we may conclude that tall fortifications were conceived as being advantageous to the besieged and a real obstacle to the besiegers. During the first siege of Tyre, King Baldwin ordered the construction of two wooden towers 'much taller than the [city's towers] made of stone [ex lignea materia turre, lapideis edificiis multo sublimiores]' from whose summits one could look into the city and wreak destruction upon it. According to Ibn al-Qalanisi, these towers were 66 and 83 feet high and were indeed taller than the city walls.²² From his description we may conclude that the height of the walls ranged between 20 m and 28 m. William tells us that the residents, who 'met each scheme by a similar one [argumentis obiciunt argumenta et

²⁰ Maqrizi, *Suluk*, I, 548.

²¹ Oliverus, 170.

²² William of Tyre, II, 17, 522; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 121–22, 125; Albert of Aachen, II, 6, 691–92; Fulcher of Chartres, II, 46, 559–61.

modis paribus)], constructed even higher towers atop their own walls, facing the Frankish siege engines, from which they hurled stones at the Franks' engines, the latter being unable to make any significant response.²³ By raising the walls, then, it was possible to counteract the Frankish siege towers' destructive capabilities, thus also lessening the efficacy of the siege.

The description of the joint Muslim–Frankish siege of Baniyas in 1140 depicts siege towers much taller than the walls against which they were pitted. Once construction of the towers was completed, writes William of Tyre, they were so much higher than the walls of Baniyas, that the defenders believed they were fighting gods, not men.²⁴

The construction of towers under battle conditions forced both sides to invest much time and resources, but it was the besiegers who had the more difficult task. To build a tower of the tremendous height of 23 m they had to carry large heavy wooden beams, and the time necessary for such construction grew lengthier and lengthier as the towers became higher and higher. During the siege of Jerusalem in 1099, the tower was completed within five weeks; during the second siege of Tyre twenty-five years later it took the Franks twice as long to erect two giant towers, this despite the fact they were supported by well-planned logistics, that they had at their disposal expert carpenters, and that the Venetian fleet transported all the necessary materials on the decks of its ships. Obviously, it was the great height of the walls of Tyre – twice that of Jerusalem – and the decision to build twin towers that resulted in construction continuing for so long a time. On the other hand, Tyre's lofty walls caused the siege to drag on, giving the defenders some respite during which reinforcements could come to their rescue.

The great height of the walls also provided the besieged with other advantages for active defence. The most important of these stemmed from the ballistic character of medieval war machines. Since the projectiles (which in addition to rocks included arrows and more) hurled by the medieval bows, ballistae, and catapults followed a ballistic course, their maximum range depended solely upon velocity and the angle of firing. This meant that when both sides used machines which hurled projectiles at the same velocity, and when the operators in both camps were equally

²³ William of Tyre, II, 17, 522: 'Duas siquiem turres, comportatis lapidibus et congesto ad multam quantitatem cemento, que machinis nostrorum recte videbantur opposite, ascendentes superedificare ceperunt, ita ut subito et intra paucos dies ligneis machinis, que exterius erant opposite, multo altiores invenirentur. Unde in subiectas machinas ignem iaculantes, omnia sine difficultate parati erant incendere'; cf. Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 122–25.

²⁴ William of Tyre, 15, 9–10, 687–88; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 261.

proficient (i.e., they were able to shoot at the ideal angle of 45 degrees), the maximum range of fire by both sides was the same. Under such conditions, one side could gain the upper hand only if it enjoyed numerical superiority – more machines than the opponent – or could attain an advantage of height over its enemy.

Advantage of height increases the range of fire and to a great degree counteracts the effect of the enemy's artillery. If the besieged are able to raise the height of their fortifications and position archers and artillery atop them, they gain an advantage which can be translated into a superior range of fire. This advantage is not very great – a short calculation indicates that the distance gained is equal to the advantage of height, i.e., if the walls are 20 m high, there will be a 20 m wide strip around the castle in which only the defenders can hit the besiegers – but it is enough to force the attackers to retreat out of the range of effective fire and thus reduce pressure on the city or castle. A campaign against a high-walled castle will force the besiegers to fire from the furthest point at which it is still possible to strike the fortifications and to ensure that their projectiles are hurled at the ideal angle of 45 degrees. If the attacking force wishes to hit the houses and soldiers behind the walls, they will have to advance their siege engines and thus bring themselves into the range of the defenders' effective fire. Furthermore, if projectiles are hurled at a 45 degree angle, an area will be created immediately behind the walls in which they cannot fall. That probably explains why the fortifications erected in the thirteenth-century concentric castle of Safad, according to Benoit of Alignian, reached a height of 44 m (20 cannas) for the internal wall and 22 m (10 cannas) for the external wall, while the measured height of the giant towers in the walls of the castle of 'Athlit is 32 m.

Massive vaults within the castle's outer range

In order to exploit to the utmost the advantages accruing from high walls against artillery and barrages of arrows fired at the castle, and also to make the most of the 'dead area' behind the walls into which the besiegers could not fire, the Franks erected massive arches next to the walls and towers which served them in peacetime as in war. The roofs covering these arches functioned as platforms on which catapults could be set, and also enabled troops to move along them and fire at will; during a military engagement the ground-floor areas beneath the roofs served as rear shelters to which the wounded could be brought and treated, as areas in which warriors could rest, drink, and refresh themselves, and as the venue

of emergency consultations. It was here too that piles of rocks for the artillery and supplies of arrows were stockpiled. During peacetime, the lord of the castle used these covered areas as storerooms, stables, and living quarters.

True, similar multi-functional vaults were to be found adjoining the outer walls of earlier fortified structures, but they underwent a substantial transformation in the third-generation concentric castles. Not only were they built along the entire circumference of the outer wall, but they were also constructed to withstand bombardment by rock missiles without collapsing. At times these were two-storied buildings in which all those within the walls and under the roof could find shelter from the barrages of rocks and arrows.

Deployment of siege engines and artillery atop the massive roofs of these vaults greatly increased the castle's effective range of fire without unduly hampering the defenders' freedom of movement or losing the advantage of height afforded by the walls and towers. Artillery could of course also have been positioned in the open courtyard behind the sheltered vaulting, but such deployment involved a reduced range of fire due to less advantageous height and to the direct loss of distance because of its positioning further back.

Positioning artillery atop the walls was not a Frankish innovation; in fact, in all the sieges they had mounted the Franks suffered from the projectiles hurled at them from the walls by the Muslims. Already during the Crusader siege of Jerusalem, the Fatimids placed catapults atop the city walls,²⁵ engines which were not inferior to those used by the Franks.²⁶ The Muslims engaged in full-scale artillery battles with the Frankish siege engines.

Another similar artillery duel took place during the siege of Tyre in 1124 and it seems to have been the major component of this campaign. William of Tyre's description is enlightening:

They [the defenders], too, built machines within the city from which they launched huge rocks that fell without intermission upon our towers. The fear inspired by these flying stones enabled the foe to become masters of that particular section, for none of the Christians dared to remain in the vicinity. Even those whose lot it was to guard the engines ventured to approach them only at the utmost speed, nor could they remain within except at extreme peril.

²⁵ William of Tyre, 7, 23, 374–75; *ibid.*, 8, 15, 405–07; Raymond of Aguilers, ed. *RHC*, 20, 299.

²⁶ William of Tyre, 8, 8, 395–97.

From their stations in the *high towers*, [my emphasis – R.E.] the enemy, armed with bows and ballistae, poured forth showers of javelins and arrows; and meanwhile a never-ceasing torrent of huge rocks hurled from within the city pressed the Christians so hard that they scarcely dared to thrust forth a hand.

In order to overcome this difficulty the Franks turned to experts for advice in the hope that they could improve the operation of their own artillery while moving it out of the enemy's range of fire:

Meanwhile, those who were manning the machines, instructed by experts in the art of throwing missiles, [docentibus his qui iaculandi periciam erant assecuti] continued to hurl great stones with such effect that the towers and walls were nearly demolished by the force of the blows.

Later in the campaign, the Franks exploited the clouds of dust raised by the crumbling stones and disintegrating plaster, which also prevented the defenders from seeing the enemy and taking proper aim. Under the cover of this mist of dust, the Franks were apparently able to advance their siege engines, for the rocks they hurled flew over the walls and destroyed buildings within the city.²⁷

All this leads us to conclude that the strategic principles of roofed-over vaults were well known to both Muslims and Franks, but the construction of the huge vaulted structures along the walls added yet another dimension to the defensive aspects of the Frankish castles because it greatly increased the number of artillery outposts without interfering with the conduct of operations in the major battlefield atop the walls.

The vaults erected along the walls of concentric castles such as those of Belvoir or Karak were supported by the walls themselves on one side, while the other side rested on piers and wall sections whose width was no less than that of the outer wall. In time, the new castles were planned so that their outer walls were built as high as was feasible and the protected area behind the walls was as extensive as possible without interfering with the normal order of life within the castle. In later castles, such as those of Crac des Chevaliers or 'Athlit, for example, the inner courtyard was reduced to a bare minimum. From a description of the Ayyubid siege of Caesarea (which had not been transformed into a 'concentric castle') we can understand the importance of a covered internal courtyard. 'During the siege of 1220 al-Malik al-Mu'azzam mounted three heavy mangonels which operated day and night. The citizens of the city were forced to look for shelter in the citadel but even the citadel was not safe enough and

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 13, 6, 593–94.

finally the Muslim sappers forced the garrison out of the city.’²⁸ During the siege of Castellum Peregrinorum in the same year, the Muslim forces ‘mounted’, according to the Latin chronicles, no less than ‘eight stone-throwing machines, one being of the very heavy type known as the trebuchet. The machines’, says the chronicler, ‘were in action day and night’. The Frankish armies were engaged in machine-supported counter-attacks and no less than 300 men were busy operating the hurling machines from the top of their own fortifications.²⁹

The moat as a major component of defence

Moats were employed as a means of defence even prior to the Crusader period and were found around some of the early Muslim castles. However, due to the paucity of archaeological excavations of such sites and the scarcity of written documentation in which ditches are mentioned, it is impossible to determine exactly to what extent Muslim castles were defended by moats, or what was their depth. It is also difficult to resolve what role they played in Muslim warfare tactics at the beginning of the twelfth century. William of Tyre, for example, records a detailed description of how the moats surrounding Jerusalem were filled by the Crusaders before they brought forward their siege engines.³⁰ In his account of the siege of Tyre, Ibn al-Qalanisi mentions the existence of a ditch, noting that its role was to prevent siege engines from being advanced to the wall.³¹ However, there are only a few mentions of such moats in the written sources, although it is quite likely that there were many other ditches which were dug under battle conditions to defend one of the warring sides. One such example is in William of Tyre’s account of the second siege of Antioch in which he describes a ditch prepared to protect the men, not the walls. Bohemond and Raymond of Toulouse ordered ‘a deep ditch of adequate width [*vallum euxerunt profundum admodum et latitudinis competentis*] to be dug . . . [to] hinder the constant attacks of the Turks as they plunged down from above . . . To render this still more effective for the protection of the townsmen, a fortification [*munitio*] was built there. . .’³²

²⁸ Eracles, II, L. 32, ch. 5, 334; Sibb b. al-Jawzi, ed. Jewett, 397.

²⁹ Oliverus, 290–91.

³⁰ William of Tyre, 8, 16, 407–08.

³¹ Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 122.

³² William of Tyre, 6, 4, 310; for other defensive ditches see *ibid.*, 13, 6, 593–94 and the sources describing the Frankish siege on Acre.

During the second siege of Tyre too the Franks dug a ditch to defend the attackers.³³ The Frankish forces also made use of defensive ditches in the early 1180s. Ibn Wasil relates that in the course of Salah al-Din's campaign against the Franks in the fall of 1183, 1,500 Frankish knights, a similar number of Turcopoles, and about 15,000 infantry fortified themselves near 'Ayn Jalut, digging ditches and erecting defences around their encampment. Though Salah al-Din ordered his crossbow archers to shoot many arrows at the Franks, he was unable to force them to come out of the area they had defended by means of ditches.³⁴

It seems that as sieges of their castles became an increasingly tangible threat, the Franks deepened the moats surrounding them. Widening and deepening ditches was intended to provide a better measure of passive defence against siege engines, for to overcome the obstacle the besiegers would have to fill them in, an effort which needed much time and exposed those carrying it out to much danger, resulting in many casualties.

Though moats prevented heavy siege engines from being positioned next to the walls, it seems that as ditches became more widespread the Franks came to recognise their additional advantages, and also became increasingly aware of the importance of raising the height of the walls which towered above the moats. Defensive moats, for example, proved advantageous against Muslim sappers, for if the ditch had been dug down to the hard bedrock, the Khorasan and Aleppan sappers were prevented from using their usual techniques to weaken the foundations of the walls. Even if the moats did not reach bedrock, the defenders could easily spot and shoot at the diggers; at any rate, tunnelling under such conditions took much longer.

The perfection and deepening of moats, then, became one of the central improvements in older castles in order to transform them into 'concentric castles' and prepare them to withstand the siege tactics prevalent during that period. Measurements which we conducted indicate that moats were 4 m to 14 m wide and 7 m deep, but according to the description of the chronicler of Benoit of Alignian the outer moat at Safad was 13.5 m wide and 15.5 m deep.

Once a moat had been completed, it became a component of great significance during a siege. In their accounts of the second siege against Karak (August–September 1184), Muslim chroniclers relate to the moat as a turning point in the entire campaign:

³³ Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 121; William of Tyre, 13, 6, 594–94.

³⁴ Ibn Wasil, 149–50.

[Salah al-Din] positioned nine mangonels in a row opposite the city gate, which destroyed the [section of the] wall before them, and the only obstacle remaining was the wide and deep ditch, a deep gully which left but one alternative: to destroy and fill it by every means. This was a difficult task. Therefore, Salah al-Din ordered [his men] to make bricks, to gather wood, and build walls leading from the suburb to the moat, to build roofs over them and erect barricades and shelters. Thus was a wide passageway created through which those assembled there could pass without danger. The soldiers assembled in order to carry forward anything that could be dumped into the moat. In this manner it was easy to fill in the moat using mobile towers that were moved forward, and to dig and reinforce the tunnels, and the men were provided with a wide passage to the moat through which they could move without being hit. They stood at the foot of the citadel at the edge of the moat without fear of rocks and arrows. The moat was filled to such an extent that a prisoner in chains hurled himself from the walls, but was saved even when the Franks threw rocks at him.³⁵

During the thirteenth century, fighting by the moats became a central characteristic of sieges mounted against all castles.

Gradually, it became common to cover the wall of the moat closest to the castle with *glacis*. Some of them were huge, like that which covered the eastern slope at Karak, and others smaller, such as those at Belvoir or Maldoim. It seems that the moats dug around the outer line of the walls had several tactical objectives. In addition to their being, first of all, an obstacle to the sappers digging under the foundations of the castle, their diagonal shape enabled the defenders to see what was happening at the foot of the wall without endangering themselves.

Larger and higher towers

The role played by stone towers in the defence of castles – of the older and newer types alike – still awaits a study which will take into account additional aspects; moreover, all the details of the fighting which raged around them have yet to be ascertained. On the whole, it can be said that during the twelfth century, battles between Muslims and Franks were waged primarily from the top of the towers and walls, and not from the alcoves or through the arrow slits in them.

Accounts of the sieges mounted by the Franks, particularly the detailed descriptions of the campaign against Tyre, are instructive concerning how fighting was conducted from the towers. In his account of the first siege of Tyre, Ibn al-Qalanisi relates how the Franks dragged their wooden siege

³⁵ Ibn Wasil, 157–58; Ibn al-Athir, 506; Ibn al-ʿAdim, 74, 79–80.

tower towards the city and hammered away at the wall with the battering rams in their towers until a few of the wall's stones were displaced and it was threatened with destruction. Then, al-Qalanasi tells us, one of the leading sailors, a native of Tripoli who knew something about ironworks as well as warfare, created iron hooks by which they caught hold of the battering ram and vigorously shook it. The Franks were finally forced to destroy their biggest battering ram lest it wreak destruction upon the tower. At a later stage in the siege, the defenders were able to set fire to the upper sections of the Frankish siege tower and kill the soldiers on it, leading the Franks to abandon the tower, which was then looted by the residents of Tyre.³⁶

The second siege of Tyre too was marked by combat between soldiers positioned on the towers. It is not surprising, therefore, that the stone towers became a symbol of power for the rulers of the cities. After Tyre capitulated to the Franks, the king's ensign [*domini regis vexillum*] was raised above the tower which commanded the city's gate, while the emblem of the duke of Venice flew over what was known as the Green Tower and the colours of the count of Tripoli could be seen on the tower of Tanaria.³⁷ The privilege of flying one's ensign from the highest tower in the castle or city, in itself a phallic symbol, signified victory and was often the cause of struggles among the leaders of the conquering troops.³⁸ This was also true of the confrontation between Baldwin III and his mother Melisend which reflected on who would hold power in Jerusalem, a struggle ending in a battle for what is today known as the Tower of David, atop of which also war machines and artillery were positioned. A similar struggle was played out as the last accord during the conquest of Acre from the Muslims.³⁹

A comparative analysis of stone towers erected on the walls of cities and castles during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries indicates that they underwent a gradual, continuous process of change.⁴⁰ During the first part of this period, most of them were built as stone-filled towers without rooms inside them, enabling fighting to be conducted only from their roofs. This was the case in the early phase of the castle at Beit Guvrin and also at Yalu (Castellum Arnaldi), as well as the pre-Crusader period

³⁶ Ibn al Qalanisi, 123–25.

³⁷ William of Tyre, 13, 13, 600–02.

³⁸ See, for example, the case of Tarsus, when Tancred and Baldwin quarrelled over the right to raise their own insignia above the highest tower: *ibid.*, 3, 20 (19), 222; 3, 21 (20), 223; 3, 24 (23), 227.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 17, 14, 778–80.

⁴⁰ Shapira-Shvar, 2000.

Fatimid castles which have been excavated at Ashdod Yam and Habonim (Cafarlet).

The size of the effective combat area of the towers also increased with time. The area of upper platforms of towers in second-generation castles measured up to 27 sq m, while that of the central towers ('keeps') in castles of that period was 52–53 sq m. The upper platform at Belvoir, the first of the concentric castles, measured 49 sq m. The same was true in Ayyubid and Frankish castles built during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. During the early thirteenth century the size of the towers was about 160 sq m, reaching even 400 sq m in one of the Ayyubid towers of Qal'at al-Subayba, or almost 350 sq m in 'Athlit's southern gate tower. Expansion of the towers was generally done by jutting out from the line of the outer wall, so that later towers projected even more outside this line. This made it easier to counter any attempt to demolish or scale the walls, and also provided the defenders with a wider range of fire. We might say that the tower was gradually transformed into an independent unit of battle.

The wall towers in later Frankish castles were hollow, though at first this did not entail additional combat levels but only internal staircases which led to posterns. In Belvoir Castle, for instance, fortified posterns were concealed in the tower corners, but most of the fighting was still conducted from their upper level. If there were firing apertures along the corridor within the tower, these were only intended to complement the major force of archers and warriors positioned on the upper platform.

The height of the Frankish towers increased continuously until it reached 100 feet (32 m) during the first half of the thirteenth century (in each of the two towers which controlled the internal wall at 'Athlit), and even 22 cannas (1 canna = 2.2 m) or 45.8 m in the seven towers of Safad.⁴¹

Improved firing apertures

As a whole, the arrow slits which the Franks set in their walls during the twelfth century, even those at Belvoir, did not enable the archers to aim with precision. All those at Belvoir had a similar shape and were of the same dimensions: height, 1.6 m; width, 1.3 m; height of the slit itself, 0.8 m; and their depth was conditioned by the width of the walls (3.3 m at their upper level). Almost similar apertures are also found in the few arrow

⁴¹ Johns, 'Athlit, 17, 44–48; Deschamps, 1939, 25, n. 1; *De constructione Castri Saphet*, 40, line 183.

slits placed in the towers themselves. It is hard to believe that the archers could squeeze into and effectively shoot from such low and long niches. The depth of the firing niche in tower no. 1 at the Muslim castle of 'Ajlun (mid-1180s) too is the full width of the wall (2.5 m), but both its opening and the size of the arrow slits are wider and higher.

In the later Ayyubid castles, those constructed in the first three decades of the thirteenth century, in addition to the firing niche there were additional niches wide and high enough to enable two archers to shoot alternately from the same arrow slit, thus enhancing their firepower. This was also the case in tower no. 13 at 'Ajlun (built in 1214–15), tower no. 9 at Mt Tabor, and at al-Subayba.⁴² A comparison of early Crusader and Ayyubid firing apertures indicates that the correlation between the architecture of fortifications and the role of archers in warfare was on a lower level among the Franks. Obviously, the greater importance of archers in Muslim military tactics was also expressed in their military architecture.

Therefore the Muslims preceded the Franks in introducing added combat levels to the towers of the outer walls, in addition to the primary combat platform on the roof. The reason for this probably lies in their superiority in the use of bows and arrows. Fighting at secondary levels can only be done through firing apertures, but the Frankish ones, at least during the twelfth century, were not suitable for this type of warfare. Even the builders of the military platforms in the central Frankish towers at Qalat Jiddin in western Galilee, apparently constructed during the 1230s, had not yet internalised the military doctrine which called for greater use of firing apertures; located at the end of corridors and difficult to access, the apertures were intended to defend the staircases only.⁴³ The combat levels in the Muslim castles of 'Ajlun, al-Subayba, and Mt Tabor indicate that the Muslim planners, on the one hand, had at a relatively early stage recognised the advantage of dividing the combat area into at least two floors and placing many archers at each and every level. The Franks, on the other hand, learned before the Muslims how to incorporate openings for sorties into the towers.

Creation of posterns for sorties

Side by side with passive defensive measures, such as the digging of wide and deep moats, much effort and means were also invested in improving

⁴² Johns, 1931, 21–33; Ellenblum, 1989, 103–12; Shapira-Shvar, 2000.

⁴³ Pringle *et al.*, 1994, 143, 49.

active defences and in the creation of posterns which open into the moats. True, in several cases (such as Beit Shean, for example), the residents did not go beyond creating a large moat which provided an additional element of defence for the existing castle, without the addition of posterns. The excavators of the Frankish Beit Shean attribute the lack of posterns for counter-attacks to the fact that the moat was apparently filled with water,⁴⁴ but this also holds true for the fortified monastery of Mons Gaudi, in which a moat running between the fortifications and the nearby mountain was not filled with water, but nevertheless lacked any posterns.

Such openings were built in the walls of the new concentric castles. They formed part of the active defence plans of these castles, and were constructed in a manner which made it difficult for the enemy to shoot directly at those who exited the castle through them. There were five such openings in the outer wall at Belvoir, but the posterns were concealed by the wall of the tower and also by the *glacis* on the external side of the wall. The openings were simple rectangular structures with one hinged door, wide and high enough to enable the soldiers to pass through them quickly and in an upright position.

In the case of openings, too, the archaeological evidence is as yet too limited and partial to enable arriving at a conclusion as to how widespread they were in the earlier castles. However, the documentary sources support the assumption that there were no openings in the walls of castles and cities during the early decades of the period that is the subject of our study. During the siege of Antioch, for example, the besieged relied on sorties through the city's gates. Each time they succeeded anew in opening the gates by surprise, dashing out and hitting at the enemy, and then retreating into the city. From this account we can safely assume that no posterns existed in their gates or walls, forcing the defenders to use the less convenient tactic of opening the gates.⁴⁵

Ibn al-Qalanisi's account of the first siege of Tyre is informative about the important role of sorties outside the city and defence of the towers. He describes an attack launched by the defenders upon the towers pitted against them, using Greek fire, firewood, pitch, and incendiary equipment. Though unable to penetrate the towers, the Muslims did manage to set fire to the smallest of them and capture weapons and equipment. Fire also spread to the highest tower, but the Franks were able to repulse the

⁴⁴ Seligman, 1995, 140; 1994, 138–41.

⁴⁵ William of Tyre, 5, 3, 273–74; see also *ibid.*, 5, 6, 277–79.

attackers, put out the fire, and place detachments from their elite units to guard the towers and catapults.⁴⁶

On the basis of the description of the second siege of Tyre, it would seem that even then orderly openings for sorties had not yet been provided. Once again the defenders were able from time to time to rush out of the city and force the Franks to engage in frontal combat. And this time too they were hampered by the fact that the city had only one gate and that exiting through it was extremely dangerous.⁴⁷ One such sortie is described by William of Tyre in relatively great detail. Several young men rushed out of the city intending to set fire to the siege engines and towers, even managing to do so to one engine 'which was of great use to us', but once having completed their bold mission they were killed to the last man.⁴⁸

The example *par excellence* of a siege in which the defenders lacked orderly openings for sorties was the battle of Baniyas in 1157. As we have seen in an earlier chapter, when they rushed out of the city to engage Nur al-Din and his forces in frontal combat, hoping to force him to retreat, the defenders had to open the city gates. When the attack failed, they began retreating, but 'the gate could not be shut . . . because the pressure of the crowd trying to enter was so great'. Nur al-Din's troops tried to exploit the tumult to enter and capture the city, but at the very last minute the defenders managed to flee into the citadel and save their lives.⁴⁹

This engagement, so near to ending in defeat and the loss of a fortified city, occurred only a few years before the series of Frankish defeats in the 1160s which reached their peak with the fall of Baniyas and the nearby castle of Hunin. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the first concentric castles were erected in the late years of that decade much thought was given to active defence and the creation of posterns. As the previous descriptions indicate, the greatest contribution of sorties was the destruction which could be wreaked upon the enemy's siege towers and artillery. When mounting sieges against Muslim cities, the Franks gave much thought to defending their own equipment. Just how much importance they attached to such acts can be learned from the strategy they adopted when the ruler of Damascus came to the aid of besieged Tyre.

⁴⁶ Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 122–23.

⁴⁷ William of Tyre, 13, 7, 594–95.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 13, 10, 597.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 18, 12, 827; Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 333–34; Abu Shama, 1, 268–72.

The Franks divided their army into three forces: one continued to besiege the city; a second prepared to meet the Muslim reinforcements on the way from Damascus; and the third was charged with defending the siege machines and towers (*machinas et castella*).⁵⁰

Another crucial task of openings in the walls or gates was to prevent tunnelling under the foundations of the walls, a tactic often employed by the Muslims. The entrances to the tunnels were the major weak point for the diggers; it was enough that a few Frankish combatants should be able to reach the entrance to waylay the Muslims' efforts.

Greater stocks of food and water

One purpose of the new type of castles was to enable those inside them to withstand lengthier sieges. A basic condition for this was stockpiling of greater quantities of food, arms, and water. Actually, second-generation castles too were able to deal with this issue because the area and volume of the vaulted rooms in many of them, erected adjacent to the exterior walls, were enough to store such quantities of food and equipment as were needed for sieges lasting several months. Furthermore, from chronicles which describe the establishment of large Frankish castles, it is clear that all of them were located near a fertile agricultural hinterland which could supply all their needs in food for long periods of time. If there was a case of insufficient supplies, it arose due to lack of consideration and planning, or from unexpected over-population during wartime, as happened in Montferrand. The third- and fourth-generation castles had a better supply of food. In Margat there was enough food for five years, and during the siege on Gastun, in 1269, the besiegers who broke into it discovered that the place 'was . . . full of grain, provisions and everything else which is stored in such forts'.⁵¹ Other large castles were equipped to store large quantities of raw grain; at Safad, 12,000 mule loads of barley and corn were consumed each year.

Water proved a more difficult problem, for accumulation of water and storing it in cisterns called for a high degree of technical proficiency, and much thought had to be given to its collection. The cisterns and drainage systems for collecting water from the roofs and courtyards had to be planned in advance of the castle's construction, so that all water would run towards one central location. This was not a problem faced only by

⁵⁰ William of Tyre, 13, 9, 595–96.

⁵¹ Ibn al-Furat, Eng. trans. ii, 127.

the constructors of the Frankish castles. The dry climate of the eastern Mediterranean basin forced builders of settlements throughout all the ages to collect runoff and rainwater, and to plan the drainage network necessary for its collection and distribution. The difficulty involved in planning such networks for large settlements, not to mention the high level of proficiency called for, led the builders of all periods to prefer sites already possessing water-collecting and drainage systems. That, I believe, is one of the major reasons for settlement continuity in the Levant.

Though it is difficult to trace the growth in reserves of water and food, we can get some clear indications from what was done at Belvoir. This castle was equipped with two large cisterns: a smaller one in the internal courtyard was filled with water from the roofs of buildings in the interior keep; the second one, several times larger than the first, stored the water running off the roofs and flowing in the courtyards of the external bailey. The enormous storage areas in Belvoir and 'Athlit point to the great stocks of food and water which must have been prepared in castles of the third generation.

Castellans used to invest money and effort to secure enough drinking water for long periods of time. In Montreal there is a very deep tunnel leading to the water level, where there was a very deep well. Almost all the castles were supplied with vast cisterns beneath the keeps; in Crac des Chevaliers there were no less than nine such cisterns, and in Saone there were two such beautiful cisterns. Many other castles, such as Carmel, Karak, Beaufort, and Margat, were provided with open cisterns, called *berquille*.

The amount of water needed for the provision of a castle could be deduced from calculations made for the amount of water carried by medieval ships. Scholars who have studied this subject believe that the amount required for a sailor's daily use was between 4 and 8 litres a day. The amount of water stored in the cisterns of Belvoir was 620 cubic meters (500 cubic meters in the outer cistern and 120 within the *donjon*). If the cisterns were full, this amount could provide for the needs of an individual warrior for 62,000 days. If we assume that no more than 300 days pass between one filling of the cistern and the next one, and that therefore that amount should be enough for 300 days, than the cisterns could supply the indefinite need of about 200 defenders.

Accounts of the construction of the castles of Safad and 'Athlit are indicative of the importance which their authors attributed to collecting and storing large quantities of drinking water. This is how Oliverus describes how water was supplied to those within the castle of 'Athlit:

‘Not far from the towers, an additional wall was erected from the seashore from one side [of the bay] to the other, surrounding a well of living water . . . There were two [additional] wells between the southern wall and the sea which provided a great quantity of fresh water, supplying all the water needed at the castle.’⁵²

The author of the anonymous chronicle attributed to Benoit of Alignian goes into great detail when describing the search for a well to provide a water supply for the castle of Safad:

How a fresh-water well was found within the castle of Saphet: Since there was a scarcity of water there, which had to be brought from afar, and since there were many beasts of burden, labourers, and expenditures, for a few days the bishop conducted a search for small springs in order to fill a pool in which the water would be collected. An aged Saracen said to the bishop’s agent: If your master will give me a tunic, I will point out to him a spring of fresh water inside the castle. And when he [i.e., the bishop] promised him a tunic, he [the Saracen] showed him the spot in which there is now a pit, above which were the ruins of a tower and walls and many piles of rocks. When the bishop asked him for a more certain sign, he told him that he would find a sword and steel helmet at the edge of the pit, and he indeed found them. And so they laboured more steadfastly and energetically until excellent flowing water was found in a quantity great enough for the entire castle.⁵³

Additional lines of walls: castles become ‘concentric’

We may now sum up our discussion by maintaining that the Franks’ concentric castles did not evolve solely from the addition of another line of walls to existing castles. The additional wall, even if to all appearances it transformed the existing castle into a concentric one, was but one component of a wider framework of improvements which significantly changed the manner in which these castles were defended. Yet, the importance of the added line of defensive walls should not be underestimated:

- it led to walls being twice as thick as the former ones, and in the event, quite frequent, in which there was also a taller internal keep, the walls were much higher than before;

⁵² Oliverus, 171.

⁵³ *De Constructione*, 39, lines 138–53.

- the area between the internal and external walls generally served as one in which artillery was positioned and where troops could rest and reorganise;
- the area between the walls was less vulnerable to Muslim artillery, deployed at a relatively greater distance outside the castle.

The additional defensive wall also took the sting out of the classic Muslim tactic of mining the foundations of the walls and towers. Though collapse of the outer defensive wall could break the spirit of the besieged (as indeed happened at Belvoir in 1188 and Caesarea in 1220), it could not lead directly to the killing in combat of the garrison and the fall of the castle. To achieve this, the attackers still had to break into the internal castle, an act that undoubtedly took some time (at least as long as did a siege against a non-concentric castle), during which the Franks could rush reinforcements to the scene.

The major contribution of the concentric castle to defence stemmed from the possibility of fighting simultaneously from several combat platforms. Under ideal conditions, it was possible to position artillery and archers atop both the internal and external walls, thus doubling – or even tripling – effective firepower. Since the different heights of the walls also provided different effective firing ranges, the same enemy outposts could be targeted both by those on the lower wall and, with the same effectiveness, by those on the higher, more distant wall. However, as noted above, the effective range increased in direct ratio to the additional height of the walls, so that the distance between the two lines of Frankish fortifications within the castle was generally no more than the additional height of each of the walls.

The technology involved in creating concentric castles was much more expensive than that employed in earlier ones, due to the size of the castles, the wide moats dug around them which first appeared on the scene at this time, and other technical means such as the giant *glacis* at Karak, in Moab, which would later influence the development of all Frankish castles. To give but one example, during the first two years of construction of the perfect concentric castle at Safad the Templars expended the sum of 1,100,000 Saracen bezants. This sum did not reflect the upkeep and improvements, which called for additional sums of money:

in each following year more or less forty thousand Saracen bezants. Every day victuals are dispensed to 1700 or more and in time of war, 2200. For the daily establishment of the castle, 50 knights, 30 sergeants brothers, and 50 Turcoples are required with their horses and arms, and 300 crossbowmen, for the works and

other offices 820 and 400 slaves. There are used there every year on average more than 12000 mule-loads of barley and corn apart from other victuals, in addition to payments to the paid soldiers and hired persons, and in addition to the horses and tack and arms and other necessities which are not easy to account.⁵⁴

Among the Franks, none but the military orders could bear such heavy expenditures for any length of time. Thus, the necessity to transform the Frankish castles into ones of the concentric type gradually resulted in their transfer from their lords to the military orders. It should be noted, however, that concentric castles could be constructed in phases: the internal castle during the first stage, in which it was equipped with only some of the improvements of this type of castle, and later the external defensive wall would be built. In Chapter 16 we shall deal with phases in the erection of a concentric castle, as reflected in the unfinished Crusader castle at Vadum Iacob.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, lines 197–215; trans. Kennedy, 1994, 196.

*The construction of a frontier castle:
the case of Vadum Iacob*

THE 1170S: A STRATEGIC EQUILIBRIUM

The refortification of the frontier fortresses and construction of the new concentric castles did not prevent the rulers of Damascus and Egypt from besieging Frankish castles and storming the Frankish frontier. From the beginning of the 1170s onward, the Muslims launched a series of attacks, using the same tactics which characterised Muslim siege-fare since the beginning of the twelfth century, namely, undermining the walls and towers, and using well-trained archers who showered the besieged garrison with arrows. All this was done while light artillery bombarded the walls. Already in the last third of the twelfth century, Muslim armies began to introduce bigger pieces of artillery, realising that the old, lighter ones could do no harm to the newly built concentric castles. But the heavier mangonels, being more complex to assemble, obliged the Muslims to carry only a small number of them to the battlefield. Thus, for example, during the unsuccessful campaign against Karak in April 1170, Nur al-Din bombarded the city with only two pieces of artillery. However, fearing a direct encounter with the Frankish reinforcements, he dismantled these two engines and withdrew after only four days of siege. Nur al-Din was not the only Muslim leader who avoided direct clashes with fully equipped Frankish forces during the 1170s; with only one disastrous exception – the Battle of Montgisard in 1177 – Frankish supremacy in field battles was seemingly still acknowledged by the Muslims.¹

During their siege of Daron in 1170 the Muslim forces did not abandon their traditional tactics: the Halabi (Aleppian) sappers undermined the walls of the burgus (*bashura*) while one piece of artillery hurled rocks at the Franks. Here, too, the Muslims abandoned the siege and turned

¹ 'Imad al-Din as quoted by Abu Shama, I, 464; William of Tyre, 20, 27, 950–51; Ibn al-Athir, 352–53; Ibn Wasil, I, 185; Ibn al-'Adim, II, 330.

towards Gaza when Frankish reinforcements drew near. During the siege, however, the Franks for the first time were reluctant to attack the Muslim forces and avoided such a direct encounter, shutting themselves in behind the walls of Daron while Salah al-Din was plundering nearby Gaza, releasing prisoners, and setting its buildings on fire.²

The acquisition of heavier siege engines by the Muslim armies was accompanied by a parallel introduction into their field armies of artisans and carpenters who could assemble the machines *in situ*. During the siege of the island fortress south of Aila in 1169, for example, Salah al-Din crossed the Sinai Desert, carrying with him on camelback several dismantled boats. According to ʿImad al-Din al-Isfahani, the artisans and warriors, who for the first time participated in a Muslim raid, succeeded in assembling the boats and storming the island citadel.³

In any event, the Muslim offensive on the Frankish frontier continued in September 1171, when Salah al-Din besieged Montreal and was about to conquer it,⁴ and in the early summer of 1173 when he attacked Karak again, pillaging its rural neighbourhood.⁵ At about the same time Muslim forces besieged the castle of ʿArqa, looting its outer burgus while storming and taking the castles of Safita and ʿArima. Similar events occurred at the same time around Tripoli as well.⁶

The offensive was not one-sided, and Salah al-Din was also well aware of the vulnerability of the Muslim frontier regions. In anticipation of a probable attack, he constructed a new fortress at Qalʿat al-Jundi in northern Sinai. Though this castle does not resemble any of the contemporary Frankish ones, and although it was probably also intended to provide adequate responses to various challenges, it should be regarded as a part of the same mutual fear and preparedness.⁷

And, indeed, during this Muslim offensive the Franks did try to strike a blow at the very heart of Egypt, mobilising a great Norman force to besiege Alexandria. A letter written by Salah al-Din himself, in which he describes the technologies employed by the Franks during the siege, indicates how much importance the Muslims attached to war machines. From the account included in this letter, we can reconstruct some of the

² William of Tyre, 20, 19, 936–37; Abu Shama, I, 489; Ibn Wasil, I, 198–99; Ibn al-Athir, 365.

³ ʿImad al-Din, as quoted by Abu Shama, I, 486; Ibn Wasil, I, 198–99; Ibn al-Athir, 365.

⁴ Ibn Wasil, I, 221; Ibn al-Athir, 371–72.

⁵ Ibn Wasil, I, 224, the description of Ibn al-Athir, 392–93 is slightly different.

⁶ Ibn al-ʿAdim, III, 28; Ibn al-Athir, 396.

⁷ Barthoux, 1922 and Wiet, 1922.

details. A Sicilian fleet dropped anchor at Alexandria on the morning of 29 July 1174, and the landing of the horses from the ships, which Salah al-Din describes as horse-carriers (*tarida*), continued until the afternoon.⁸ The Frankish fleet brought with it 1,500 cavalry and 30,000 infantry on the decks of no less than 200 large warships, each of which could carry 150 foot-soldiers. Six ships were loaded with large wooden siege engines and war machines, while an additional forty vessels carried supplies and more men, including esquires, shipbuilders, and the builders of mobile towers, siege towers (*dababat*), and catapults. All in all, the Frankish force numbered 50,000 men, who set up 300 tents. By the morning of 30 July, three (six, according to another source) siege towers were already standing, equipped with battering rams and three heavy catapults that hurled heavy black rocks (volcanic rocks?) brought from Sicily. The Muslims were awed by their power, the size of the rocks they could hurl, and the damage they inflicted. The mobile towers, equipped with battering rams, were similar to the stationary towers in the strength of the wood from which they were constructed, their height, width, and the number of warriors they could bear. The Franks placed them alongside the walls, and fighting raged throughout the day.

Salah al-Din himself describes both Alexandria and Damietta as frontier cities (*thughhr*), although they were far from any possible border, but the very fact that he had to recruit his armies to defend them justifies referring to them as frontier cities. In any event, fighting continued despite the fact that the mobile towers had been positioned and the catapults 'hit the walls like sea waves'. The residents of Alexandria, wrote Salah al-Din, held out under siege, even though the military force was small. The Franks were awed by their bravery and the craftsmanship of their arms. On the third day, the Muslims opened the city gate,

rushed out by surprise . . . burned the standing siege towers and fought next to them . . . Only those of the cavalry who vested themselves of their dress [i.e., armour] and jumped into the water were saved. The rest were taken by the Muslim warriors. The Muslims attacked a few of the ships and sank them, and the others fled. The enemy were killed, captured, or drowned. Three hundred horsemen dug in atop a hill, their horses were captured, and later they were killed or taken captive. The Muslims took as the spoils of war unheard of [quantities] of [siege] engines and supplies. The fleet left the port on the first day of Muharram 570 [2 August 1174].⁹

⁸ A light vessel, used for the transportation of horses and cavalry: *tartan*, *tartane*, *tartana*, *tarida*.

⁹ Quoted in Abu Shama, I, 598–99; Ibn Wasil, II, 11–16; and in Ibn al-Athir, 412–14.

Despite their defeat, the Franks continued to threaten not only Egypt but also Muslim political centres in Damascus and the Bīqā' of Lebanon.

In August 1175, King Baldwin IV led an expedition to the gates of Damascus, destroying the unfortified village of Bayt Jann. A year later, in August 1176, Raymond III of Tripoli, regent for the young and sick King Baldwin IV, led a Frankish force to Baalbek. In 1177, the Byzantines equipped a fleet of seventy galleys and numerous freighters in order to land in Egypt, but the initiative was delayed and a year later was abandoned altogether.

On the other hand, Salah al-Din, who previously was busy building up his own strength, secured his position as the heir of Nur al-Din and for the first time attacked the Franks in the heart of their own kingdom. The attack commenced with a blockade of the frontier castles of Daron and Gaza, but he later succeeded in forcing the king and 500 of his knights to withdraw into Ascalon. He took Ramlah, besieged Lydda, and even sent a vanguard all the way up to Arsuf, burning villages and crops on the way. However, in the real battle, waged at Montgisard on 25 November 1177, the Frankish army crushed the Muslims and Salah al-Din was forced to flee towards Egypt. On their way, the routed remnants of the Muslim army were defeated once again, this time by the Bedouins of Sinai.¹⁰

The Frankish leaders launched an offensive with the objective of exploiting the success of victory at Montgisard by the capture of Muslim castles. Hama was besieged already in November of the same year, 'following the defeat of Ramlah [i.e., Montgisard]',¹¹ and Harim was blockaded immediately afterwards, following heavy bombardment by the Frankish artillery and scaling of the walls. Using psychological warfare, the Franks displayed the personal tent of Salah al-Din, taken as booty in the battle of Montgisard, to the defenders of Harim. Simultaneously they also employed a typically Muslim tactic and undermined the walls.¹²

VADUM IACOB: THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FRONTIER CONCENTRIC CASTLE

The great Frankish victory at Montgisard continued to influence the behaviour of the warring parties during the next few years. The Muslims

¹⁰ According to Maqrizi Baldwin IV besieged the citadel of Sadr, probably Qal'at al-Jundi in Wadi Sadr, after Montgisard. See Maqrizi, trans. Quatremère, *ROL*, VIII, 527.

¹¹ Ibn al-Athir, 444; according to Ibn Wasil, II, 64, the siege of Hama occurred twelve days before the defeat of Ramlah.

¹² Ibn al-Adim, III, 36–37; Ibn Wasil, II, 64; Ibn al-Athir, 445.

were wary of meeting the Franks, whose superiority in land battles remained intact, and even strengthened during the period, in face-to-face combat. They therefore refrained from launching decisive frontal engagements and ceased their efforts to penetrate into the heart of the Frankish kingdom, limiting themselves to attacking distant frontier castles or isolated forces in distress. The Franks, for their part, tried to reduce Muslim military pressure by extending their own frontier areas and by mounting attacks on the Muslim frontier. This new strategic equilibrium between Franks and Muslims was expressed in the construction of two new frontier castles, Vadum Iacob and Hunin (*Castellum Novum*), in 1178–79. However, in the final tally it was the Muslims who changed the balance of power in their favour and undermined Frankish self-confidence by the extension of the Frankish frontier area and by capturing the new castle at Vadum Iacob.

Both Frankish and Muslim sources relate that the castle of Vadum Iacob (*Le gué de Jacob*) was built in the Muslim, and not the Frankish, frontier area. The thirteenth-century Frankish chronicler Ernoul states explicitly that ‘the Templars of the land of Jerusalem came to the king and told him that they should build a castle *in Muslim territory* [my emphasis – R.E.]’.¹³ Ernoul’s testimony is confirmed by Abu Shama, who argues that the castle was built because the Franks wanted to weaken the most vulnerable part of the ‘Muslims’ *thughhr*’ (i.e., frontier) and make crossing the Jordan more difficult.¹⁴ Both Abu Shama and Ernoul were convinced, therefore, that Vadum Iacob (called Bayt al-Ahzan by the Muslims) constituted part of the Muslim *thughhr* and not of the Frankish frontier. Ibn Wasil even notes that the commanders of Salah al-Din’s army informed him that ‘if the construction of the castle [Vadum Iacob] is achieved, it will be possible to raid Muslim territory at very short notice’.¹⁵ The Franks’ decision to build a new castle on the Muslim frontier undoubtedly testifies to their self-confidence after the battle of Montgisard, even though it obligated them to adopt special security measures during its construction.

A second frontier castle, *Castellum Novum* (Hunin), was also built at the same time and in a very similar strategically important location. Hunin was built atop a steeply sloped mountain dominating the

¹³ ‘vinrent li Templier en le tiere de Jherusalem au roi, et disent qu’il voloient fermer .I. castiel en tiere de Sarrasins, en .I. Liu c’on apiele le ‘Wés Jacob’, près d’une eve’ Ernoul, p. 52.

¹⁴ Abu Shama, p. 6.

¹⁵ Ibn Wasil, II, 72.

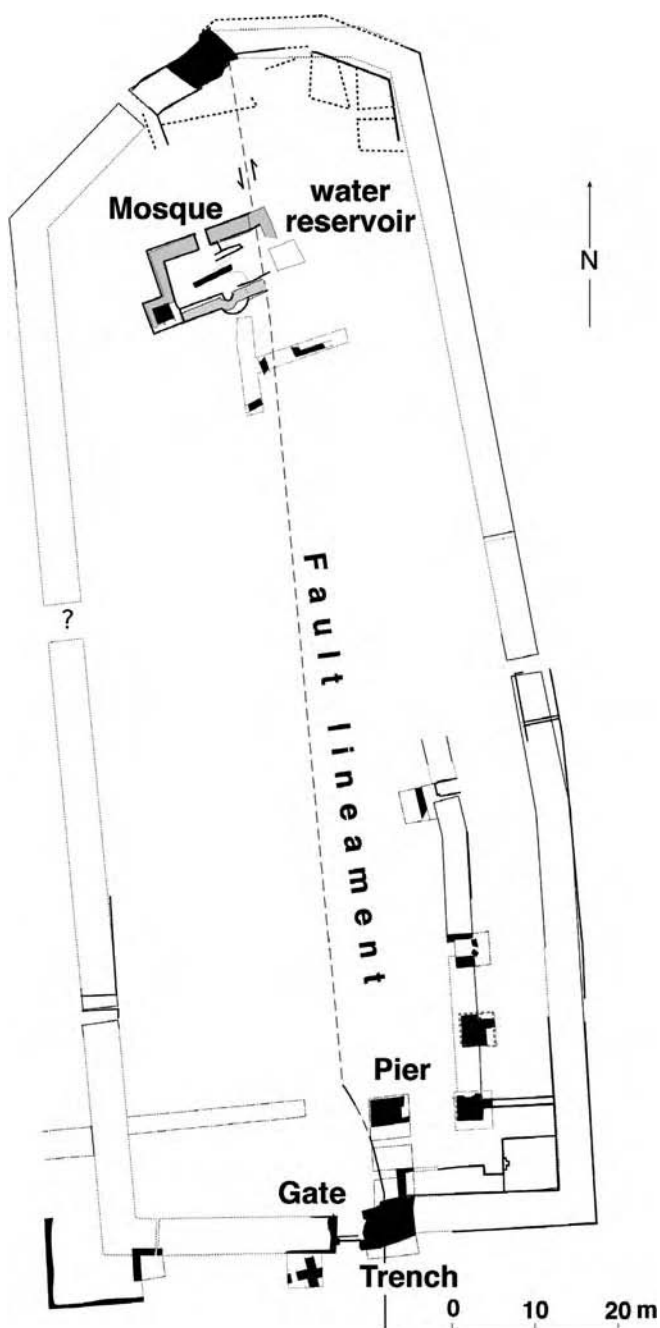


Figure 16.1. The castle of Vadum Iacob (plan).

Tyre–Tibnin–Damascus trade route, while Vadum Iacob dominated the Via Maris, where it crossed over from Palestine to Damascus. But whereas Salah al-Din invested time and money in efforts to buy or destroy Vadum Iacob like ‘one effaces letters from a parchment’, the construction of the twin castle of Hunin seems to have passed unnoticed. I believe that the difference lay in the fact that while Hunin was considered a rebuilt Frankish castle, the construction of Vadum Iacob was seen as an act of aggression and an attempt to change the status quo. The fact that the castle was built on what had been a Muslim sacred site only added to the determination of the Muslim forces to capture and destroy it.¹⁶

According to William of Tyre, the construction of Vadum Iacob began when Baldwin IV mobilised his army and arrived at the site in October 1178, and was completed *six months later*, in April 1179.¹⁷ William did not witness its completion, since he had left for Rome in October 1178, but other sources – both Muslim and Latin – describe the castle as already completed in April–May 1179 and testify to the king’s departure from the construction site at the beginning of April 1179, six months after construction began.¹⁸

The excavations I have conducted at Vadum Iacob over the past ten years, however, have revealed that the castle had not been completed even at the time of its destruction on 30 August 1179, and certainly not five months earlier. The builders did not even excavate the foundations for more than 75 per cent of the proposed castle, and an extensive part of it was left untouched. Separate heaps of construction materials, cut pebbles, and loads of lime, as well as many work implements (spades, hoes, picks, a wheelbarrow, plastering spoon, scissors, etc.), were found throughout the site. In fact, Vadum Iacob was no more than a busy construction site when the castle was destroyed.

A similar discrepancy can be found in the description of the construction of the castle of Safad, which was built fifty years later, between 1240

¹⁶ Ellenblum, 2003.

¹⁷ William of Tyre, 21, 25 (26), 997: ‘Eodem mense, quo nos iter ad synodum arripuimus, dominus rex cum omnibus regni viribus castrum quoddam super ripas Iordanis, in eo loco qui vulgo Vadum Iacob appellatur, aggressus est edificare.’ William, who departed in October 1178 (*ibid.*, 996) was very likely aware of the preparations for the castle. Note that he speaks about the completion of the wall within six months: ‘Porro collis erat ibi mediocriter eminens, murum mire spissitudinis in quadrum edificantes opere solidissimo ad convenientem altitudinem *infra sex menses* erexerunt.’ And again: ‘Salahadinus . . . castrum nostrum, quod nuper Aprili proxime preterito fuerat consummatum, obsideret,’ *ibid.*, 29 (30), 1003.

¹⁸ Abu Shama, 8; Ellenblum, 2003.

and 1260. According to Benoît, the bishop of Marseilles, who was involved in its first construction phase, when he left the site after less than six months of work the castle was already finished, and was in a defensible state ('castrum *firmatum fuit*, ita quod posset se defendere contra fidei inimicos'). However, when he returned twenty years later he was impressed by the outer wall, which had been added to the castle since his first visit. He does not explain how a castle can be 'finished and in a defensible state' while the outer wall was added only later. Evidently, William of Tyre, Abu Shama, and Benoît of Marseille's conception of a completed medieval castle is different than ours, and both Safad and Vadum Iacob were not really 'completed' when declared as such.

I believe therefore that a better understanding of the meaning of 'a medieval castle being completed' can provide an explanation of the apparent inconsistency between the historical texts, which describe these castles as functioning entities, and the physical remains, which testify to their incomplete state. It seems to me that a medieval castle was considered 'completed' when the first ('curtain') wall encircled the building site. Only then was it possible for the army, recruited to defend the builders and the results of their efforts, to depart and confer responsibility for the security of the site upon the local garrison.

This definition, applicable to the traditional castles, remained in force when concentric castles replaced the traditional ones. Concentric castles too were declared to be 'completed' when construction of one of the curtain walls was concluded, or – to cite Benoît's biographer – 'when the castle was closed around, so that it could defend itself against the enemies of the faith'.¹⁹

Construction of a concentric castle was divided, therefore, into two or three stages. The first stage consisted of building a curtain wall, which was usually completed within a few months, encircling the entire place and providing for minimal security. The second and third stages, which could have been simultaneous, consisted of the construction of the second curtain wall, of the buildings inside the castle, and the installation of the inner baileys.

The construction of such a castle in a threatened frontier environment posed further difficulties, which again could be exemplified in the case of

¹⁹ 'Mansit autem ibi dictus episcopus donec *castrum firmatum fuit*, ita quod posset se defendere contra fidei inimicos' (my emphasis – R. E.), *De constructione*, lines 150–52; compare Kennedy, 1994, 194. Kennedy translated this line as 'The bishop stayed there until the castle *was firmly established* so that it could defend itself against the enemies of the faith.'

Vadum Iacob. The proximity of this castle to Damascus, as well as vivid memories of the 1157 defeat by Nur al-Din which had occurred in the future location of Vadum Iacob itself, obliged the king to prepare himself for an imminent and sudden attack and to mobilise the kingdom's army to protect the artisans and building activities. The king even decided to maintain the entire army at the site for the duration of the first stage and to winter there himself. Moreover, since there was no other Frankish castle in the vicinity which could be relied upon for the recruitment of artisans or the supply of oxen, tools, grain, etc., the king and his construction overseers had to transport everything that would be needed during the work. Twenty years earlier, the Hospitallers had furnished a similar convoy for the rebuilding of the frontier city of Baniyas. Nur al-Din attacked and annihilated the convoy, causing the Hospitallers to abandon their co-ownership of both Baniyas and Hunin and their plans in the entire region.²⁰ A similar convoy was organised to secure the construction of the castle of Safad, in 1240, when it was considered a frontier castle. 'Crossbowmen and other armed men were chosen with many pack animals to carry arms, supplies and other necessary materials. Granaries, cellars, treasuries, and other offices were generously and happily opened to make payments. A great number of workmen and slaves were sent there with the tools and materials they needed.'²¹

Mobilisation of an army for so long a period of time added to the costs of construction, which the king was probably obliged to meet from his own treasury, since the whole region was known to be a Muslim frontier. Writing in 1265, Jean of Ibelin states that when vassals were obliged to go abroad 'for the common interest of the kingdom', the king had to provide for their living.²² Jean Richard maintains that the king had to compensate his vassals not only abroad but even, in cases of long service, within the

²⁰ William of Tyre, 18, 12, 826–27, says that the Hospitallers 'assembled supplies of provisions and arms and . . . a body of troops.' According to Ibn al-Qalanisi there were 700 knights, not including sergeants and Knights Templars, in the convoy; Ibn al-Qalanisi, 330–31. For an earlier mobilisation of a whole army for the construction of a castle (Shaubak), see William of Tyre, 11, 26, 535.

²¹ *De Construction Castri Saphet*, lines 117–30: 'et sine mora electa est militum, sirvientum, balistariorum et armatorum aliorum laudabilis comitiva et saumerii multi ad portandum arma et victualia et alia necessaria, et aperta sunt granaria et cellaria et thesauraria et alie officine ad faciendas expensas magnifice ac gaudenter, et missa est ibi multitudo operariorum et sclavorum cum instrumentis et impensis sibi necessariis, et letata est terra in adventu eorum et exultavit vera chrisianitas Terre Sancte.' English trans, Kennedy, 1994.

²² *Livre de Jean d'Ibelin*, Lois I, c. 217, 347: 'Et celui ou ciaux que le seignor semont ou fait semondre so come il deit de l'une des treis dittes choses, et il aquiaut la semonce et vait ou servise dou siggnor le seignor li deit doner ces estouveirs souffisaument tant come il sera en cel servise.'

confines of the kingdom. Hans Mayer, who maintains that the king compensated his vassals only on rare occasions and that the campaigns on the eastern frontier were considered to be within the boundaries of the kingdom, believes that the knights had to fend for themselves during such campaigns.²³ In any event, it is clear that someone, be it the king or the men themselves, had to pay for such a long absence of knights and sergeants from home; it is equally evident that on building missions such as this, the king could not offer an equivalent payment in kind (booty, or landed property) to compensate his soldiers for their time and expenditure.

Construction of a frontier castle was therefore much more expensive than of one within the kingdom itself, and the cost of maintaining the army had to be added to that of building materials and labour. Evidently, the king (or his men) would be eager to complete the building operation in the shortest possible time without compromising the quality of construction.

Completion of the first stage can therefore be calculated from the date of the king's departure. The last royal charter issued at Vadum Iacob was sealed on 2 April 1179, and by the end of that month the king and his men were already back in Jerusalem.²⁴ The garrison of Knights Templar, who had the entire region as a grant from the king, assumed responsibility for the safety of the artisans and builders in Vadum Iacob as well. From mid-April 1179 onwards, the Knights Templar are mentioned as the sole representatives of the Frankish side in all negotiations and military events, whereas the king, who was present there until then, is not mentioned at all.²⁵

A strange and unique episode in the history of Vadum Iacob sheds more light on both the nature of medieval frontier castles and the cost of their construction. According to Ibn Abi Tayy, Salah al-Din offered to buy Bayt al-Ahzan (Vadum Iacob) from its Frankish garrison, and negotiated possible terms.²⁶ The Templars were willing to hand over their newly built castle if the Muslims would pay the building expenses. The sultan, the chronicler goes on, offered them 60,000 dinars and was prepared to raise his offer to 100,000 dinars, because 'the Templars provided it generously with a garrison, provisions, and arms of all kinds'.

²³ Richard, 1979, 91; Mayer, 1984, 93–161; Edbury, 1977, 328–56.

²⁴ See *RH* 579, 2 April 1179; *RH* 562, 8 September 1178; Ibn al-Athir, 635–36.

²⁵ Ernoul, 52–53.

²⁶ Abu Shama (quoting Ibn Abi Tayy), 6. For Ibn Abi Tayy see Cahen, 1935, 258–69.

According to Ibn Abi Tāyī however, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn decided to raise a bigger Muslim army that would eventually destroy the place, once it was taken.²⁷ These negotiations, and the calculations which lay behind them, were hinted at once again after the destruction of the castle in August 1179. The qādī al-Faḍl told the caliph in Baghdad that the fortress was built of 20,000 stones, each costing no less than 4 dinars.²⁸ Quoting the cost of each stone was very uncommon, so it seems that by the qādī's calculations the stones alone cost more than 80,000 dinars.²⁹ Therefore, the total cost of building the castle, including timber, cement, manpower, and security forces, had to be a great deal more. Apparently the qādī was anxious to defend Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn for offering so large an amount of money to 'the unbelievers' for their partially built castle.

In any event, these negotiations lend support to my earlier observation (based on both Ernoul and Abu Shama) that Vadum Jacob was built in Muslim territory. The idea of selling a Frankish castle standing on Frankish territory is illogical, especially after the Franks' decisive victory of 1177. The negotiations, in which the king is not mentioned, can be dated to the second half of April and the beginning of May 1179, after his departure from the building site and before the first Muslim attack on the castle, which followed their failure. According to Abu Shama, this attack began in the second half of May 1179.

THE FIRST WALL

It is reasonable to assume that because of the limited time at their disposal the Frankish builders would have preferred to begin with the inner wall, postponing the construction of the longer and more fortified outer one. But such a decision, influenced by budgetary and security considerations, could have caused technical difficulties and unduly prolonged the next stages. Construction of a curtain wall at an early stage of the project would have made it difficult for carts laden with stones and timber to enter the site and for the empty carts containing building refuse to exit, causing daily bottlenecks near the gates.

²⁷ Abu Sahma, 6, 8.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁹ And indeed, the number of stones used in the walls of Vadum Jacob (about 280m, 4.3m thick and probably not less than 10m high, the average stone being 0.75×0.5) was of the order mentioned by the source (appr. 15,000 stones for both the inner and outer faces of the wall).

The builders of Vadum Iacob, therefore, did not hesitate to open no less than five gates in the inner curtain wall and reduce the ability of the castle to protect itself in case of a siege. This act, which enabled better and faster communication among the builders working inside and outside that wall and facilitated the removal of the earth excavated for the foundations, lends further credence to the assumption that the completed wall was intended to be the inner wall of the future castle. This assumption is further supported by the fact that the earth excavated for the foundations of the walls was dumped and accumulated outside the curtain wall and partially covered it. The fill was levelled around the perimeter of the wall and on top of it we found arrowheads and other remains of the siege, indicating that this was the surface level during the siege of August 1179. There are indications that the fill was intended to remain where it was and not be removed, and that the walls were planned to remain partially covered. This is probably the reason why we found thresholds to all the gates, to be opened at the top level of the fill. The walls were covered up to this level, and if the fill was intended to be removed, the gates would have remained 3 metres above the foundations of the walls (see Figure 16.1, a plan showing the location of the gates). We believe, therefore, that the builders planned to construct an additional concentric wall in front of the existing one, and that the dumped earth was intended to remain under the outer courtyard, filling the area between the inner wall and the planned concentric one. According to this reconstruction, in the final layout of the castle the gates were supposed to connect the inner and outer courtyards.

This reconstruction is further corroborated when the drainage systems prepared for the foundations are examined. It is evident that the builders were well aware of the need to drain water off the foundations, since they had probably learned from their own experience that trapping a considerable volume of earth between the outer walls must be avoided, for if not adequately drained it might absorb a great amount of water. The water could exert hydrostatic pressure on the walls and cause them to collapse. This problem is even more acute in the Mediterranean area, where most rainfall is concentrated in only a few months of the year. In order to avoid such a danger and to seal off the foundations, the builders excavated and transported to the building site two kinds of earth: brown soil, the product of basalt rock, rich in Smaktite and feldspar and a lesser amount of kaolinite, and another yellow soil, rich in several varieties of clay, which was also brought from a great distance. The two types have engineering and hydrostatic qualities meant to prevent, or at least to considerably decrease, penetration of water into the foundations. To ensure that the

water would escape outside the castle area, drainage outlets were opened in the wall at the height of the top layer of the fill outside. The clay layers were laid in a gentle slope, so that the water could flow through the drainage outlets. Surprisingly enough, we found that the clayish layers, which were meant to seal off the foundations, also covered the fill outside. It is evident that the builders regarded the outer fill not as a temporary heap of refuse, but as something which was to remain there after completion of the castle. The accumulation and levelling of layers of clay brought into the castle in cartloads – an operation which consumed a great deal of time and undoubtedly required great resources – point to the planned nature of the operation and to the fact that the builders put their minds to preparing a drainage system for the foundations immediately after construction of the curtain wall was completed.

Moreover, although the castle was built in the late 1170s, when the importance of towers, posterns, and moats was fully acknowledged, the builders of Vadum Iacob attached only one tower to the newly built curtain wall, and even this tower was built as a solid podium, with no room for posterns. The Frankish builders began excavations for a moat, but the location of the future moat was about 10 metres to the north and south of the curtain wall.

The only possible conclusion is that the partially covered wall, with its five openings, could be none other than the inner and shorter concentric wall, and that construction of another wall was planned for the second and the third stages. These stages were never realised. The builders of the second phase began their construction activities from the southeast corner of the castle and moved northwards. They first completed two essential installations: an oven and a cistern, both covered by the same high vault, the intention probably being to proceed northward. But then the castle came under attack and was destroyed.

THE SIEGE OF VADUM IACOB

After his defeat in the battle of Montgisard in November 1177, Salah al-Din was very reluctant to challenge the entire Frankish army in an open field battle, so he dared attack Vadum Iacob only after the king's departure for Jerusalem. Thus, Salah al-Din was limited to the usual siege of five to six days' duration, the time needed for the Frankish army to mobilise, reach Tiberias, and deploy from there in battle array. Salah al-Din's first attack on the newly built castle began immediately after the failure of negotiations on 16 May 1179 and lasted for only five days. William of Tyre

believes that an arrow shot by a certain Frankish knight, Rainerius de Marun, which killed an important emir, was what caused the Muslims to raise that first siege, while ʿImad al-Din al-Isfahani, secretary to Salah al-Din, maintains that the Muslims had to wait for reinforcements to arrive from Egypt.³⁰ It seems, however, that after a fruitless first five-day siege, Salah al-Din realised that he would not be able to complete the conquest before the arrival of Frankish reinforcements, and therefore ordered a retreat.

The decisive attack against Vadum Iacob commenced on 19 Rabiʿ 575 (24 August 1179), the Muslim forces being commanded by Salah al-Din himself and his closest emirs. On that day they pitched their tents along the eastern bank of the Jordan and spent the next day searching for foliage and timber to conceal the siege engines; they went as far as the outskirts of Safad, cutting down Frankish vineyards on their way.³¹ The Muslim army had brought in artillery to ensure its victory, but since time was of the essence the Muslim engineers were expected to assemble and position the engines under heavy bombardment and a hail of arrows from within the castle. One of the Muslim commanders, ʿIzz al-Din Jauli al-Asadi, suggested that storming the Frankish *al-bashura* (*burgus*?) situated next to the main castle, instead of laying an organised machine-supported siege, would save time and effort.³² The attack was rendered successful by a young warrior dressed in a shabby shirt, holding a sword in one hand and a leather shield in the other, who assailed the walls of the *burgus* without waiting for support from his fellows.³³ The Franks withdrew into the castle (*hisn*), bolting the gates behind them and keeping watch from within. The Muslims occupied the *burgus* and advanced their forces into it, fighting on through the night, for Salah al-Din was in great haste to complete the conquest before the anticipated arrival of Frankish reinforcements.

³⁰ William of Tyre, 21, 26 (27), 999–1000, dates the attack to 27 May 1179; Isfahani (al-Bandari), 168, dates it eleven days earlier.

³¹ ʿImad al-Din, 170–71: ‘We arrived at the crossing of Bayt al-Ahzan on Saturday [24 August], and the castle is built to the west of the river. We camped near the crossing; we pitched many tents on the hills . . . We said: ‘It is a strong place, we should conceal the engines, we should search for timber and tools.’ The sultan rode to Safad the next day, which was Sunday, and the castle of Safad was held by the Templars who are the source of filth. He [Salah al-Dīn] ordered to cut the vineyard [of Safad] and to use the vine-leaves for the hiding of our engines.’

³² According to Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, IV, 636; Isfahani (al-Bandari), 168–69, however, notes that the hurling machines were assembled a day earlier, after the excursion to Safad. Evidently Salah al-Dīn preferred to take at least part of the castle by storm and not wait for the results of an organised attack, which could have taken much longer.

³³ Ibn al-Athir, ed. *RHC*, IV, 637–38.

And, indeed, when news arrived that Salah al-Din had invested Vadum Iacob the king called up the full strength of the realm and all its military forces 'to Tiberias. There he convoked all the leading men of the realm with the intention of going to the aid of the besieged and forcing the enemy to raise the siege.'³⁴ But the besieged Franks, not trusting the fortifications of their own unfinished castle, locked themselves inside and set fire to the outer gates – either to gain time or to signal their desperate situation to their fellow knights in Tiberias.³⁵ Realising that it would be difficult to take the castle by assault, Salah al-Din adopted the customary strategy of tunnelling under the walls. Nor did he wait for sunrise – the sappers began work immediately and the tunnel was completed by the morning of Tuesday, 27 August, four days after the siege had gotten underway.³⁶ Salah al-Din had allotted a specific section to each of his leading emirs and urged them to begin the assault and tunnelling without delay. 'Izz al-Din Faruh Shah was assigned the southern wall, accompanied by professional sappers, the sultan himself began the process in the north, Nasir al-Din Muhammad Ibn Shirkuh was allotted the adjacent part of the western wall, and a section was also entrusted to Taqi al-Din.

The results of the first attempts, however, were very disappointing. The tunnel was 30 feet deep but only 3 feet wide, while the width of the wall, according to 'Imad al-Din, was 9 feet; and even though the timber supporting the tunnel was set on fire the wall did not collapse. Salah al-Din was in a hurry; he could not wait for the fire to be extinguished gradually. Information had reached him concerning 'a great gathering of the Franks in Tiberias'.³⁷ He therefore promised one dinar for every skinful of water poured onto the flames. Wrote 'Imad al-Din: 'I saw the men bringing skins full of water, and when the tunnel was flooded with water the fire was extinguished and the sappers could renew their efforts.'

On Wednesday, the sappers dug a deeper and wider tunnel and once again lit a fire, with a large Frankish force already assembled in Tiberias.

³⁴ William of Tyre, 21 (29), 1003: 'Quod ubi domino regi fuit nuntiatum, convocans regni robur omne et militiam universam . . . apud Tyberiadem properat, ubi collectis universis regni primoribus, opem ferre obsessis, hostes ab obsidione amovere proponit.'

³⁵ While archaeological evidence supports this description, the purpose in setting fire to the gates is not entirely clear.

³⁶ The dates are somewhat confused in the Muslim descriptions of the siege. It seems that the sappers had already started their digging on the night between Sunday and Monday, and finished their work within twenty-four hours.

³⁷ Abu Shama, p. 11.

Finally, at sunrise on Thursday, 29 August 1179, on the morning of the sixth day of the siege, the Muslim sappers, who had worked unceasingly for five days, managed to break through. The walls collapsed to the wild applause of the Muslims. The Franks had erected a temporary timber wall in an attempt to gain time, but a strong wind fanned the flames, killing many of the Frankish warriors. (During the excavations, the body of at least one of the defenders was found *in situ*, opposite the breach in the wall.) The Muslim accounts record in amazement how the commander of the castle jumped into the flames.³⁸ The remaining Franks asked for *aman* (surrender terms), and from Tiberias the Frankish army could see their fortress ablaze and covered in heavy smoke.³⁹

The Muslim texts do not refer to Salah al-Din's response to the surrender request, but he apparently refused to grant it. The Muslim armies entered the castle, killing many of the defenders and taking many others captive. The estimated numbers provided by Muslim sources are a total of 1,500 Franks, of whom 800 were killed and 700 – 80 of them knights – were taken captive. The defenders included many artisans: masons, carpenters, armourers, stone cutters (at least 100 of them being Muslim captives), and others.⁴⁰ Salah al-Din interrogated many of them personally, executing Muslims who had converted to Christianity and archers who were responsible for many of the Muslim casualties. Salah al-Din's booty amounted to the armour of about 1,000 knights and sergeants, 100,000 weapons, and many animals, and the Frankish captives were marched to Damascus.

The Muslim troops then destroyed the castle and threw the corpses of its defenders into a deep cistern. This last thoughtless act was probably the cause of a plague that broke out within three days of the conquest, causing Salah al-Din and his men to evacuate the site and make their way to Damascus, where they arrived prior to 13 September 1179, only a fortnight after the conquest of Vadum Iacob. During my excavations of the castle the remains of the skeletons of no less than five Frankish soldiers and ten equids were found at the site, and could for the first time shed more light on the nature of medieval warfare and slaughter.

The fall of Vadum Iacob on 29 August 1179 was a turning point in the military conflict between Franks and Muslims. For the first time in many

³⁸ For a description of the commander's dramatic suicide see the letter of al-Fad'īl in Abu Shama, 13.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Abu Shama (*ibid.*), speaks about 15 squadrons of 50 sergeants and servants and artisans of all kinds.

years, the Muslims captured a large Frankish castle which, even though its construction had not yet been completed, was planned as a concentric castle larger than any others then existing in the Levant, or even in Europe. Salah al-Din had planned his strategy very carefully. Fully aware that the erection of an additional wall and completion of the castle would seriously hamper – if not prevent altogether – his ability to take Vadum Iacob, he knew that the timing of the attack was of the utmost importance. The victory was recorded in many Muslim sources, which did not cease to glorify the achievement: letters were sent to Baghdad, while songs of praise and triumph were devoted to the conquerors and also commemorated Patriarch Iacob, after whom the castle was named, whose honour had been redeemed by the conquerors.

The fall of Vadum Iacob intensified the sense of living in a frontier area which permeated Galilee and Trans-Jordan, now frontiers *par excellence*. The radius of Muslim attacks and incursions increased, their targets now including a greater number of centres within the Frankish kingdom. The Franks more and more refrained from frontal military engagements with the Muslims, and the siege mentality, which would soon lead to the disastrous defeat at the Horns of Hattin, increasingly gained a foothold in the minds of the Franks.

*The last years of the Latin Kingdom: a new
balance of power*

The reciprocal attacks by Muslims and Franks across their enemy's frontiers became more devastating and more frequent during the 1180s. The Muslims' military successes encouraged them to assail the Franks deep within their territory and to deploy better siege engines in their siege-fare. At the same time, the Franks were on the defence and on many occasions avoided any direct confrontation with the Muslim forces.

A two-year truce, described by William of Tyre as 'unprecedented' and as 'somewhat humiliating to us', was concluded 'on equal terms, with no reservations of importance on our [Frankish] part' in the spring of 1180, as the consequence of a five-year drought which had affected the whole region. The truce, proposed by the Franks, was to be observed on land and sea and valid for foreigners and natives alike (*tam per mare quam per terras tam advenis quam indigenis*).¹ However, it followed a raid on the region of Safad mounted by the ruler of Baalbek one month earlier, in April 1180.² Both sides violated the truce. Salah al-Din is reported as plundering the area of Hisn al-Akrad (Crac des Chevaliers) in 1180, probably because the County of Tripoli was not included in the truce,³ but a year later, in 1181, his nephew Farrukh-Shah invaded the territory of Karak, justifying his effort as an attempt to abort Reynald of Châtillon's plan to assail the Hijaz.⁴ Farrukh-Shah penetrated into the territory of Karak, pillaging and devastating Frankish villages, and returned to his own frontier only to wait for Reynald to dissolve his army.⁵ Reynald of Châtillon violated the truce once more when he seized certain Arabs (beduins?) and refused to release them on demand.⁶

¹ William of Tyre, 22, 1, 1008; Lyons and Jackson, 1982, 146.

² Ibn Wasil, 11, 86.

³ William of Tyre, 22, 2, 1008.

⁴ For al-Fadil refers to such an alarm, when he quotes a letter sent by the garrison of the castle of 'Ayla. See Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 1, 185.

⁵ Ibn Wasil, 11, 101-02; Ibn al-Athir, 470; Abu 'l-Fida', *Taquim*, 50.

⁶ William of Tyre, 22, 15 (14), 1026.

In April 1182 Salah al-Din seized the wreckage of a ship sunk near the shores of Damietta and refused to return its crew and cargo. The Franks accused him of violating the truce and of inventing excuses to do so,⁷ but it appears that the sultan was determined to take advantage of the improved geopolitical situation, and the end of the drought, to renew hostilities. In May 1182 he embarked on a provocative crossing of the Frankish frontier, probably to show the Franks that they could not prevent him from doing so. The main body of his caravan, including many civilians and refugees who had left Syria because of the famine, took the safer eastern road,⁸ whereas the sultan himself, together with his bravest warriors, travelled along the king's road which passed through Karak itself, challenging the Frankish army gathered there. The Franks, however, avoided the battle, an act interpreted by Salah al-Din as a sign of weakness: 'They are prepared to fight only when they are shut in behind their fortifications', he wrote. Such behaviour was unheard of previously; not only were the Muslims able to cross Frankish territory unmolested and ignore the presence of the army arrayed in its entire strength, but the army seems not to have intervened at all!⁹

As the audacity of the Muslims' raids increased, so grew the size of the frontier which they threatened. In May–June 1182, while the Frankish army was still assembled at Karak, ostensibly waiting for – but actually avoiding – a battle with Salah al-Din, they learned of an attack against a different section of their frontier, once more commanded by Farrukh-Shah. The Muslim general directed his assault against the Frankish village of Buria at the foot of Mt Tabor. The inhabitants in vain sought refuge in the village's tower, but the Muslims mined it, and four hours later took it, together with no less than 500 captives.¹⁰ Farrukh-Shah pursued his success, besieging and taking the Cave Castle in the Gilead (Habis Jaldak). In June 1182, after settling his men in this newly conquered castle and doubling the number of his prisoners, he returned to Damascus with no less than 20,000 head of cattle.¹¹

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Lyons and Jackson, 1982, 165.

⁹ Ibn Wasil, II, 114–15; Ibn al-Athir, 478–79; William of Tyre, 22, 15 (14), 1027; see also Lyons and Jackson, 1982, 165, quoting al-Fāḍil, *al-durr al-nazīma min tarassul* 'Abd al-Rahīm (hereafter cited as al-Fāḍil), Ms. Brit. Mus. Add. 25757.9.

¹⁰ William of Tyre, 22, 15 (14), 1027–28.

¹¹ Ibn Wasil, II, 115; Ibn al-Athir, 479–81; Maqrizi, trans. Blochet, 151; Lyons and Jackson, 1982, 167, quoting al-Fāḍil, Ms. Brit. Mus. Add. 25757.9. The Franks blamed the Syrian garrison of the castle, 'a race which is regarded by us as weak and effeminate', for the loss of the castle: William of Tyre, 22, 16 (15), 1029; Ellenblum, 1998, 142.

His success encouraged Salah al-Din to launch another attack, considered to be biggest of all previous assaults since the arrival of the Franks in the Levant.¹² According to William of Tyre, he had 20,000 men at his disposal, whereas the Franks could muster only 700. Salah al-Din took the city of Bethsan, while Farrukh-Shah was trying to break into its citadel. The Muslims were busy pillaging the area as far as Jinnin and Lajjun but stopped their raids when they learned of the approach of Frankish reinforcements. The sultan, however, influenced by the size of his army, decided to challenge the Franks in a frontal showdown fought near the fortified village of Forbelet. The Franks held the upper hand, demonstrating once again their tactical military superiority. The defeat was substantial, but not comparable to the Muslim defeat at Montgisard five years earlier.¹³ In the time that had passed between the two battles, Salah al-Din had become a worthy rival, and although he had been defeated in almost all of his face-to-face battles, he was taken seriously by his rivals, intimidating on more and more occasions the armies assembled against him. Nevertheless, immediately after his failure at Forbelet, without waiting for another year, he renewed his efforts and raided the region of Beirut while simultaneously launching another attack against the southern frontier, laying waste to the entire region around Gaza, Ascalon, and Daron.¹⁴

The incessant Muslim attacks on Frankish frontiers and their relative military achievements were overt manifestations of the new balance of power created during the 1180s. True, the Franks still successfully defeated Muslim armies whenever really necessary and were still able to invade Muslim territories, but their traditional superiority in field combat was no longer evident. The new balance of power was manifested for the first time in 1179, when a Muslim army was able to take the newly built castle of Vadum Iacob, and it became ever more clear following any Frankish attempt to avoid a direct confrontation. The Muslims, for their part, were eager to challenge the Franks and did not withdraw on the approach of Frankish reinforcements.

The years 1182 and 1183 saw the last attempts by the Franks to invade Muslim territories. The invasion of September 1182, for example, was directed against Bostrum in the Hawran. The Franks were unable to take that fortified city, but on their way back they besieged and captured the

¹² William of Tyre, 22, 17 (16), 1031: 'the older princes of the kingdom declared that at no time since the arrival of the Latins in Syria had they beheld such a mighty array of foes'.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Ibn Wasil, II, 115; William of Tyre, 22, 18 (17), 1033.

Cave Castle in the Gilead.¹⁵ To pursue this success, they immediately launched another attack, in December 1182, re-entering the Damascene frontier, looting local villages, and threatening to demolish a mosque in the village of Daria, on the outskirts of Damascus. The governor of Damascus, in his turn, despatched a group of Syrian Christians bearing a counter-threat: if harm befell the mosque of Daria, all Christian churches in the Muslim territories would be destroyed in retaliation. The Frankish army abandoned its intention to destroy the mosque and by Christmas was already back in Tyre.¹⁶

The year 1183 was a real turning point in the military history of the two adversaries. On the one hand, we have the heroic attempt of Reynald of Châtillon to raid the Hijaz, and on the other, we are witness to cowardly self-protection by the biggest Frankish army ever assembled, that avoided frontal combat with a Muslim army invading the Latin Kingdom.

In February 1183 the lord of Trans-Jordan, Reynald of Châtillon, initiated a very audacious Frankish raid towards the Red Sea and the Hijaz, for the first time posing a threat to the holy cities of Islam. The first phase of this raid was based on the tactics already applied twelve years earlier by Salah al-Din himself, when he laid siege to the island castle of 'Ayla. Reynald carried with him five dismantled ships on camelback and reconstructed them on the shore of the Gulf of 'Aqaba (Eilat). The rebuilt ships were large enough to carry artillery and sail 500 kilometers southward to the shores of the Hijaz. The fleet was captured and its sailors executed, although their fate remained unknown to the Franks. 'Nothing was heard from them after sailing from there, and I do not know what happened to them', writes Ernoul.¹⁷

In September of that same year it was the turn of the Muslim armies to display their audacity, when they invaded eastern Galilee, and of the Frankish armies to exhibit their cowardice. Already at the beginning of the clashes, the Franks hurriedly abandoned the castle of Bethsan without a fight.¹⁸ The city, which had not yet been concentrically fortified, was probably considered unsafe and as yet incapable of withstanding direct

¹⁵ William of Tyre, 22, 21 (20)–22 (21), 1038–42.

¹⁶ Ibn Wasil, II, 118; William of Tyre, 22, 23 (22), 1042–43, ignores the episode in Daria.

¹⁷ Ernoul, 69–70; Ibn Wasil, II, 127–29; Ibn al-Athir, 490; according to Maqrizi, the fortifications of the castle were not strong enough and collapsed because of the heavy rains of the winter of 1181–82, see Maqrizi, trans. Blochet, 146; Abu Shama, ed. *RHC*. IV, 230ff.; Cahen, *Chronique*, Hamilton, 1978.

¹⁸ According to Baha al-Din the Franks left behind clothes, corn, and merchandises. The Muslims looted them and set the rest ablaze. Baha al-Din, 491, cf. 501; Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 1/1:81, after the conquest of Belvoir in 1189 the area is described as the 'desert of Bethsan'. Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 1/1:101.

assaults, but such a desertion was unprecedented. The city and the neighbouring towers were sacked and burned without interference, and the rescue force, led by Humphrey of Turon, was annihilated. The Muslim forces were ready to face the main body of the Frankish army, commanded by Guy de Lusignan, but the confrontation, expected to take place near the spring of Tubaniya, never materialised. The Frankish force, comprising 1,300 knights, 15,000 Turcopoles, and as many foot soldiers, dared not attack the Muslims; in fact they even dug a moat to defend themselves from any attack. The Frankish army remained petrified even when they saw the Muslims ravaging and molesting the neighbouring countryside and sacking big villages such as Zir'in and Tabor for eight days.¹⁹ Such conduct was unheard of in the history of the kingdom, and Guy was forced to abandon his position as regent because of the fiasco. The 'people . . . were astonished to see them [i.e., the princes] neglect so splendid an opportunity to combat the enemy, and to make no move to attack.'²⁰

The main conclusion to be drawn from this event is that Frankish forces were no longer able to deter the Muslims from attacking them. The Franks replaced their traditional offensive tactics with new defensive strategies, and from then onwards tended to enclose themselves behind temporary or permanent fortifications. The widely held image of the Franks as preferring to be shut in behind the walls of their fortifications was created during this period, and is relevant for this and later periods only.

Salah al-Din, for his part, did not halt his offensive. Immediately after returning to Damascus in mid-October 1183, he commenced another attack on the Frankish frontier, one that also illustrates the improvements he had made in his siege warfare. The target chosen was once again the remote frontier castle of Karak which, unlike Bethsan, was a concentric one. The sultan arrived before the walls of Karak in November 1183, besieging and bombarding it day and night without success. The castle was too strong for the forces of Salah al-Din, and he was forced to retreat when Frankish reinforcements were on their way to the site.²¹ According to Imad al-Din, the Muslims positioned only one heavy mangonel against the city and failed to bring with them a large enough siege train.²²

¹⁹ Ibn Wasil, II, 148–51; William of Tyre mentions 1,300 knights and 15,000 foot soldiers and points out that even the oldest knights were unable to recall so large a gathering, William of Tyre, 22, 28 (27), 1053; Imad al-Din (al-Bandari), 266.

²⁰ William of Tyre, 22, 28 (27), 1054; Ernoul, 98–100.

²¹ Ibn Wasil, II, 151, 158; Ibn al-Athir, 502.

²² Lyons and Jackson, 1982, 210, quoting from Bodlian Ms. 126b.

Salah al-Din renewed his efforts a year later. But even the second siege did not lead to the castle's surrender, despite the extensive deployment of catapults and the unprecedented application of mobile siege towers (*dababat*) by Muslim forces. Ibn Wasil relates that Salah al-Din positioned opposite the city gate no less than nine heavy catapults in order to destroy the wall. 'No Frank can put his head out without receiving an arrow in the eye . . . The towers and fortifications opposite the mangonels have been destroyed . . . nothing remains but to fill in the moat. . . ', reports Abu Shama. Not surprisingly, William of Tyre uses almost the same words: 'Stones of such great size were hurled that no one inside the walls dared raise a hand or look out of the openings or try any method of resistance.'²³ According to William, the only obstacle preventing the Muslims from taking the city was a wide and deep moat that separated the burgus from the citadel. Since it was essential to fill it in, if the Muslims were serious in their efforts to take the citadel, Salah al-Din ordered his men to make bricks, gather wood, and erect walls from the burgus to the moat. The walls were then to be faced with wood and bricks, and barricades and shelters built above them.

Filling in the moat created a wide passageway through which the besiegers could advance their mobile siege engines. Newly erected mangonels joined in the bombardment, but the besieged garrison sent out a call for help. Salah al-Din decided to raise the siege, burn his machines, and retreat to a better position north of Karak. The two armies camped one opposite the other in a standstill, the Franks again avoiding a direct confrontation. Finally, it was the Franks who retreated and now it was 'Imad-al Din (!) who deplored 'the lost opportunity and the escape of the bird from the nest'.²⁴ Salah al-Din did not turn back to Damascus. Instead, he crossed the Jordan, ravaging northern Samaria and the coast, which was empty of defenders. At Nablus he plundered and set the town afire but was unable to take its citadel; from there he advanced to Sebaste, releasing eighty Muslim prisoners; then he moved on to Jinnin, undermining the tower and taking more booty and prisoners. The Muslims completed their raid in Zir'in, 'Ayn Jalut, and Belvoir.²⁵

²³ Abu Shama, II, 55–56; eight machines, according to William of Tyre, six within, where the ancient city had stood, and two outside, in the place which is commonly known as Obelet, William of Tyre, 22, 31 (30), 1059.

²⁴ Ibn Wasil, II, 157–58; Ibn al-Athir, 506; Ibn al 'Adim, III, 74, 79–80; Ernoul, 105; Lyons and Jackson, 1982, 219.

²⁵ Ibn Wasil, II, 158–59; Ibn al-Athir, 507; Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 84.

THE BATTLE OF HATTIN AND AFTER

'In punishment for our sins', deploras William of Tyre in the last chapters of his unfinished monumental chronicle of the Latin Kingdom, 'the enemy has become stronger than ourselves, and we who used to triumph over our foes and customarily bore away the glorious palm of victory, now, deprived of divine favor, retire from the field in ignominious defeat after nearly every conflict'.²⁶

For no less than ten years, from the battle of Montgisard in November 1177 to the battle of Hattin in July 1187, Salah al-Din sought in vain an opportunity to destroy the Frankish army in a face-to-face showdown. For ten years he improved the ability and audacity of his forces, introduced more sophisticated technologies of siege-fare, and ameliorated his logistic capabilities. However, despite all these efforts, he either lacked confidence in his own power or was unable to impose a showdown on his adversaries. On several occasions (such as the battle of Forbelet) he suffered defeats at the hands of the Franks, although his army was bigger and better equipped; on other occasions he was denied the glory of victory because of Frankish cowardice and unwillingness to fight.

Nevertheless, his army constantly increased in strength, reaching its peak during the aborted battle of Tubaniya in 1183 and the unsuccessful siege of Karak in 1184. In both cases the Muslims were more courageous and demonstrated better technological abilities than their rivals, but could not capitalise on their initial success. The battle of Hattin provided Salah al-Din with the opportunity he had been seeking for so many years, ever since the battle of Montgisard: to destroy the Frankish army in a frontal engagement and prove his supremacy.

His victory, therefore, was not only evidence of the change being concluded; it was also the reason for a fundamental change in Frankish military thought. For so many years theirs had been a strategy of offensive action. Even the builders of Frankish castles relied on the superior Frankish field army that would come to their rescue whenever needed. Most of these castles were not able to sustain themselves during a lengthy and machine-dependent siege, were totally dependent on the rapid arrival of rescue forces, and could not endure lengthy periods of siege.

During the decade between the battles of Montgisard and Hattin, the role played by both parties was reversed: the Muslims were constantly on

²⁶ William of Tyre, 23, 1061.

the offensive, and the Franks sought refuge behind walls, towers, and moats, time and again avoiding a real and frontal showdown, lest they should suffer defeat at the hands of their increasingly stronger rival.

The battle of Hattin, therefore, marked the peak of this change and was no chance defeat of unworthy leaders or of a specific army. For the first time, Salah al-Din was able to demonstrate his abilities in field combat, and his victory signified the transfer of military hegemony (or at least the equality of the forces), forcing the Franks to change their strategic approach. Frankish confidence in the superiority of their field force conditioned the localities in which castles could be built, conditioned their spatial distribution, and even their methods of defence. Castles and field armies had been interdependent for many years and were considered to be components of equal standing in the same defensive system. The Frankish defeat in the battle of Hattin, and the hasty surrender of so many castles immediately afterwards, were clear indications that Frankish superiority in field combat and siege-fare had come to an end. The defeat heralded in a new strategic approach, one centred on self-sustaining castles that could maintain and defend themselves for a long time even when the centre no longer existed.

From this point of view, the huge investment in concentric castles justified itself, at least partially, after the battle of Hattin. These castles, although not yet fully equipped, held out for much longer periods of time, and some of those that capitulated did so due to the low morale of their garrisons and not because they were physically unable to carry on in their isolated state. Whereas most second-generation Frankish castles, including cities such as Jerusalem, capitulated within a relatively short period of time, concentric castles fared differently. Some of them resisted for more than a year, forcing Salah al-Din to assail them over and over again and bring all his might to bear.

In any event, after Hattin Muslim siege-fare was usually machine supported. Before moving from Tyre to Acre during the winter of 1188, for example, Salah al-Din had to destroy all the siege engines that could not easily be moved, but still had difficulty with his baggage train, which took a week to pass the Ladder of Tyre.²⁷ Another example is the machine-supported siege against the concentric castle of Hunin, which

²⁷ Lyons and Jackson, 1982, 283. Even during the siege of Jerusalem they used mangonels; see, for example, Ibn al-ʿAdim, III, 98; for the single mangonel employed during the siege of Saone see Ibn al-ʿAdim, III, 103; for the use of mangonels during other siege events see *ibid.*, 104–06.

capitulated only in January 1188,²⁸ leaving the concentric castles of Safad, Belvoir, Karak, Shaubak, and the as yet non-concentric castles of Beaufort and Abu al-Hasan in the area of Sidon, as the most impressive surviving strongholds.²⁹

The siege of Safad, conducted during the winter of 1188–89, was a manifestation of the deployment of bigger trebuchets by Muslim forces and of their adoption of siege techniques. Baha al-Din describes the siege in the following manner:

[Safad] is a strong fortress, which is surrounded on all side by deep ravines. The army invested the place and set up trebuchets . . . The rains were heavy and the ground became muddy, but this did not affect the Sultan's great efforts . . . I was in attendance on him one night when he specified the positions of five trebuchets to be set up, and said that night: We should not sleep until the five are in place. He entrusted each trebuchet to a group and his messengers were going to and fro with reports for him and instructions for what they should do, until dawn rose over us and we were still attending him. The trebuchets were finished and only the fitting of their *khansirs* remained to be done . . . it surrendered on terms on 14th of Shawal.³⁰ (6.12.1188)

The siege of Belvoir, which continued for eighteen months, indicates better than many other events the military advantages of concentric fortifications. According to Muslim sources, Salah al-Din besieged the castle twice. Stormy weather prevented him from taking it during his first attempt, forcing him to retreat to Damascus to seek reinforcements. He is reported as saying that the place was defended by well-supplied, tough survivors of earlier sieges. Ibn al-Athir's description is the most detailed: he describes a very difficult and stormy siege that actually began in December 1187. The guards, he says, changed regularly, keeping a certain distance from the walls and not attempting to draw nearer to them, probably because of the Frankish archers and artillery atop the wall. During the last evening of 1187, a stormy and windy night, the guard, who had spent the whole day praying, fell asleep during his shift. The other guards did not notice that the Franks made a sally, probably through the posterns, mingled with the guards with swords drawn, and killed them all. The Franks took all the food and arms they found in the Muslim camp and returned to their positions atop the wall. It would be

²⁸ According to Baha al-Din, however, the city capitulated in 23 Shawal 583 (= 26 December 1187), Baha al-Din, 67.

²⁹ Imad al-Din al-Isfahānī, ed. Massé, 75–76.

³⁰ Baha al-Din, trans. Richards, 88–89 [Bahā? al-Dīn, 95]; for the meaning of *khansir* see, 32, n. 1; see also, Ibn al-ʿAdīm, III, 107;

difficult to find a better example of the importance and efficiency of posterns and sallies, two essential components of concentric castles.³¹ According to Maqrizi, however, Salah al-Din continued the siege with no less than 500 horsemen.³²

Several weeks later, after the capitulation of Safad, Salah al-Din returned to Belvoir, to pursue the siege. He constructed a temporary defensive wall to defend his men and his own tents, which were within range of the castle, from the arrows fired by the defenders, and started undermining the wall. Ibn al-Athir describes this effort in dramatic colours. Salah al-Din, he says, discussed a possible surrender and threatened the defenders with death, captivity, and plunder if they continued fighting. The Franks, however, were determined to continue their defence, and Imad al-Din al-Isfahani quotes them as saying: 'Were only one of us left, the House of the Hospitallers would still be guarded.'³³

Heavy artillery bombardment continued without cessation, accompanied by assaults several times a day. Many of the besiegers were killed by stones and crossbow bolts, so their baggage and tents were sent to the Jordan Valley for shelter. The Muslim archers, however, shot such intensive fire at the Frankish garrison that none of the defenders dared look out of the 'head of the main wall.' Finally, the Muslim sappers succeeded in breaking through the outer wall of the burgus, which collapsed with much noise. The Muslim forces then proceeded towards the higher wall, and the garrison agreed to surrender in return for a safe conduct. Belvoir castle capitulated on 7 January 1189, eighteen months after the battle of Hattin, but not before it had manifested all the advantages of the concentric castle: preventing the besiegers from approaching the castle, the efficacy of posterns, resistance of such castles to sapping, and so on.³⁴

The siege of Karak was another example of the ability of concentric castles to hold out. Salah al-Din was certain that it would surrender upon his arrival. But

there were good people inside the castle who did not wish to disgrace themselves or harm the Christian cause. They held out and defended it vigorously for so long that they ate dogs and cats and all the animals in the castle . . . [In Montreal too] they endured the siege so long that they sold their wives and their children to

³¹ Ibn al-Athir, 558.

³² Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 99; Ibn al-Athir, 557–58; Baha al-Din, trans. Richards, 89 [Bahā' al-Din, 96]; Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, ed. Massé, 80–82 (Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, 177–79).

³³ Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, 166.

³⁴ Baha al-Din, 78–79; Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, ed. Massé, 104 (Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, 204); Ibn al-Athir, XII, 23; Ibn al-'Adim, III, 108; Abu Shama, II, 136.

the Saracens to get bread. And those in Montreal lost their sight, so that they could no longer see, for lack of salt which they did not have.³⁵

If we summarise the events described above, we may conclude that Muslim siege-fare developed to such a degree in the late 1180s that it was certainly equal to the Franks in equipment and tactics. The Muslims now used heavy artillery equivalent to that deployed by the Franks (usually hybrid types of trebuchets and, later, also counterweight trebuchets) and constructed various kinds of siege towers and catapults.³⁶ Frankish concentric castles were the only technology which could withstand the newly adopted siege engines and methods of siege-fare. During the late 1190s, when the Franks once again refortified or built new castles in the Levant, they had recourse primarily to the concentric defensive approach. Thirteenth-century concentric castles were bigger, supplied with better fortifications, and planned to withstand very long periods of siege.

The new technology was much too expensive for most of the landlords; as a consequence many of the castles were handed over to the military orders, the only organizations that could bear the cost of building and maintenance. Moreover, the strategy based on speedy help from the central forces was no longer valid, and the thirteenth-century Frankish field army did not play as important a role as its equivalent in the previous century.

In the mid-twelfth century, the balance of power depended on Frankish superiority over the Muslims in two main areas: field battles and siege warfare. The development of Muslim siege-fare and field warfare between the late 1160s and the late 1180s enabled them to match the Franks in both areas. The only remaining Frankish military superiority was their more advanced military architecture. But this too was about to be equalled by Muslim military engineers. The Ayyubid castle on Mt Tabor, built in the early 1210s, was still inferior to the contemporary castles of 'Athlit or even to the earlier and less sophisticated castle of Belvoir, but the fortifications of al-Subayba, built in the mid-1220s, already presented a better and more developed plan which reached even higher levels during the Mamluk reign. Muslim military architecture and castle building had already attained an unprecedented level during the early 1260s. Renewal of the

³⁵ Eracles, 104–05, according to Lyon MS D; cf. Kennedy, 102.

³⁶ Thus, for example, the *Zanburac*, which appears to have been part of Salah al-Din's arsenal already during the siege of Tyre in 1187, appears once again during the siege of Acre in 1189; Abu Shama, II, 119; Ibn Wasil, II, 144; for a detailed description of the *Zanburac* see Sāwīrus Ibn al-Muqaffa', III, part 2, 85–86.

fortifications of al-Subayba, for example, rebuilt in 1274 by Bilik, a mamluk of Baybars and his viceroy,³⁷ is a state of the art military structure, its workmanship unmatched by any other contemporary Levantine or European castles.

The same can be said with regard to siege-fare: the Mamluk sultans attained such efficiency in the use of artillery that no major Crusader castle survived a siege of more than six weeks, although the castle of Safad was taken by treachery. Arsuf in 1266, Safad in that same year, Crac des Chevaliers in 1271, Margat in 1285, and Acre in 1291 – all these castles held out for no more than six weeks. The castle of ʿAthlit, however, the crowning example of Crusader military architecture, was never taken by siege because its Templar garrison abandoned it after the fall of Acre.³⁸

³⁷ Amitai, 1989, 11–119; 2001, 109–123.

³⁸ Marshall, 1992, 243–45.

Conclusion

Almost two hundred years have elapsed since the Académie Française began to define anew the role and importance of the Crusades in European history, thus beginning the process of their rehabilitation. Two centuries later it is a matter of fact that the Crusades are no longer considered to have been a negative and immoral phenomenon; in many respects they have even become a source of pride.

This profound conceptual transformation cannot be attributed only to the Romantic movement and the new ideas promoted by the French Revolution. A deeper turn in the conceptualisation of the Crusades occurred much later, in the 1830s, when the narrative of the Crusades was appropriated by many of the nascent national movements, becoming an inseparable component of the nationalist and colonialist discourses. Until the 1830s, all the studies of the Crusades (including those written by the participants in the Académie Française's competition) viewed them as a pan-European episode that could not be attributed to a specific nation. But from the beginning of the 1830s onwards, nationalist and colonialist interpretations of the Crusades became the rule of the day, in effect holding sway up to this very day.

The date of this change can be pinpointed: it came about when the French scholar Joseph-François Michaud, a royalist and a devoted Catholic, set out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. In the port of Toulon he chanced upon the huge fleet about to set sail to attack and capture Algeria. From that moment Michaud began to compare colonialist expeditions to the Crusades and to portray the Crusades as a completely 'French' episode. Such a combination of the Crusader narrative with both the nationalist and colonialist discourses appeared in the abridged edition of his *magnum opus* on the Crusades, which he managed to republish before his death in 1837. The transformation of the Crusades from a pan-European into a French narrative was taken up by the French government and became an important component of French national historiography.

François Guizot, the leading intellectual exponent of the July Monarchy, introduced, as minister of public instruction (1832–37), the new approach to the new educational system and gave the Crusades a considerable place in the first exhibition devoted to French history, held in the palace at Versailles.

Even if this moment, which I have chosen to portray as the one in which the Crusader narrative turned into a French and colonialist story, is only metaphorical, and even if such a concept had at an earlier or later date entered the minds of Michaud or another of his contemporaries, there is no doubt that the early 1830s were a turning point in this respect. In those years, historians of various nationalities ceased treating the Crusades as an all-European story, turning them into an increasingly relevant episode of their own national histories. The history of the Crusades was written anew by German, Belgian, English, and other historians, each of whom found in them lessons significant for the unique needs of their own national movements. Thus was the European narrative dismantled, to be replaced by several national narratives, and leading Crusaders were adopted as national heroes of many nations. The fact that the boundaries of the medieval ‘nations’ did not exactly correspond with their modern borders led each nation to adopt those who had been born in what was later to become part of its national territory as ‘their’ national heroes. Thus did Godfrey of Bouillon become a Catholic ‘Belgian’ national hero, even though Belgium did not exist as a national entity in the twelfth century; Richard the Lion Heart became an ‘Englishman’, even though it is doubtful if he would have defined himself as such; and German historians preferred to stress the important role of Friedrich Barbarossa and his contribution to the unification of Germany.

On the other hand, a similar metamorphosis was the lot of leading nineteenth-century figures, some of them, such as Napoleon Bonaparte and King Charles X, becoming quasi-Crusader heroes, at least for Michaud and the French historians who followed him.

Viewing the Crusades as belonging to the nationalist discourse was part of a wider transformation undergone by the conceptualisation of the Middle Ages that occurred particularly during the 1830s. The nascent national movements, in their search for national icons, appropriated historical figures as ‘national heroes’ and historical events and periods as ‘golden ages’. Later it was flowers, garments, specific items of food and drink, historical buildings, and even entire architectural styles which were adopted as national symbols. Every item characteristic of the nation became a national symbol because it was considered to be a fitting

expression of the national spirit. The archaeological and architectural sites upon which the choice fell in this respect are especially instructive.

In this category, it was medieval buildings and architectural styles which were chosen as authentic expressions of the national spirit, even though these very edifices and styles had previously been conceived as being all-European *par excellence*, and even if several nations claimed the very same styles as their own. Medieval architecture was preferred to Classical styles because in Classical Antiquity buildings had been erected in accordance with strict orders and on the basis of uniform rules of proportion, which until then had been accepted as exemplary models of orderly construction and good taste but which were now unsuitable to serve as models for 'national edifices'. Classical buildings lacked a regional or local character and were seen as expressing the pan-European heritage rather than the local one that manifested the spirit of a specific nation. The medieval heritage, on the other hand, was thought to represent the old, romantic, world of generations gone by and the Catholic communalism which was looked back upon with yearning. It was replete with stylistic improvisations and local influences, and thus it was more easily adopted by national movements, and more easily became a model for imitation.

Just as with the story of the Crusades, here too we are witness to a narrative which, until the end of the eighteenth century, had been conceived as being pan-European; and once again we are witness to the process of its dissolution into several parallel national narratives. The English lauded the Norman and Plantagenet styles, the Germans pointed to the German origin of the builders of Strasburg's cathedral, while the French portrayed all medieval architecture – just as they had done with the history of the Crusades – as a French achievement *par excellence*. Medieval churches, and in their wake medieval castles and cities too, continued to exist as local symbols, but were gradually transformed into icons of a European identity which was at one and the same time both universal and local.

The process of the rehabilitation of the Crusades influenced not only how the Crusaders were viewed by nineteenth-century historians, but also the manner in which these scholars understood their own national history and collective identity. Furthermore, the various nationalist discourses did not limit themselves to adopting certain architectural styles as their very own; they moved into another sphere whose influence was the most conspicuous of all: archaeology.

Already in the nineteenth century, archaeology and archaeological sites were used to testify to the age-old roots of modern nationalities and were

assigned a major role in the definition of 'national pasts'. That is probably what lies behind the development of archaeology during that century into a sphere of 'state scholarship'. Archaeologists were compelled to obtain licences to conduct their excavations, and the finds they uncovered were often designated as 'state treasures' to be displayed in national museums. Many nation-states provided archaeologists with the necessary funds to ensure the status of the 'national heritage' assigned to the findings.

'Nationalisation' of the archaeological heritage fitted in well with the parallel process by which the Crusades became part of the nationalist discourse. As early as the 1860s, French, English, and German archaeologists had begun to carry out projects which would lend support to their nationalist conceptions and the preferred nationality of the Crusaders. De Vogüé was able to find evidence for the existence of 'French' churches in the Frankish east, Conder claimed to have found evidence of Norman construction and the influence of Richard the Lion Heart in that very same region, while Prutz and Sepp received economic support from Bismarck as they (unsuccessfully) searched for the remains of Friedrich Barbarossa among the ruins of a church at Tyre. Each scholar sought the archaeological underpinnings for his own national narrative of the Crusades, and each tried to provide Crusader archaeology with the nationalist interpretation to which he was personally inclined.

The penetration of the nationalist discourse into Crusader historiography was accompanied by a parallel incursion of the colonialist discourse, expressed primarily in extensive research into the character of the relationship between the Frankish regime (seen as an early form of colonialism) and the local population (considered to be an early version of the 'natives'). French scholars, who believed in the ability of their countrymen to maintain warm and friendly relations with their subjects, claimed that even during the Crusader period French patronage enabled the existence of joint communities of Westerners and Easterners. Later French historians went even further, depicting relations between the Franks and the local population in terms of complete assimilation and the mutual transfer of ideas and concepts. They attributed to the Frankish regime in the East qualities of tolerance and enlightened rule, claiming that these were characteristic of French colonial rule throughout the ages.

This positive assessment, adopted by nineteenth-century French historians, went well with the 'mission' approach of French colonialism which, on the one hand, distinguished between French conquests and the 'selfish aggression' of other colonial powers, especially Great Britain, and tried to implement assimilation between 'natives' and Frenchmen, on the other.

'The story', writes Robert Tombs, 'that African children were taught in school about "our ancestors the Gauls" was probably a myth, but one uncomfortably close to home.'¹ The pro-colonialist viewpoint which saw in the local populations partners of the French in their role as defenders of Eastern Christianity was greatly enhanced in the wake of the Crimean War and the massacre of Christians in Beirut and Damascus in 1860. These events were a reminder to the French of the persecutions suffered by Christians in the East prior to the Crusades, leading to stronger identification with the fate of the Eastern Christians, but also with the help which their forefathers had extended them many centuries ago.

As the nationalist and colonialist discourses gained an increasingly stronger foothold in Crusade scholarship, they also left traces in studies devoted to medieval technological innovations. Thus, the origin of Gothic churches and cathedrals was an issue hotly debated among French archaeologists and architects in the nineteenth century. The debate centred primarily around the claim that the Gothic arch, thought to be a vital component for the development of this architectural style, had materialised in the East. The opponents of this view, who considered the Gothic church to be a French innovation *per se*, refused to share with their Eastern subjects what they saw as a national icon and a source of national pride.

The viewpoints arising from the nationalist and colonialist discourses continued to influence historians in the twentieth century, and were also manifested in modern interpretations of medieval settled space. Thus, for example, to this very day we visualise the 'borders of the medieval state' or the 'defence systems intended to protect the borders' in terms adopted from the modern nation-state, an entity defined by its borders. The shape of borders is so deeply imbedded in our minds that in several cases it also serves as an icon that describes the state, such as the 'Italian boot', the 'French hexagon', and more, but this should not tempt us to assume that the 'states' of Classical Antiquity or the Middle Ages had linear borders which could be given cartographic expression. This is an anachronism. The same can be said in relation to defensive strategies supposedly employed to protect the borders of a medieval state, or the role of castles in such a plan of defence. Due to the character of the modern nation-state, we intuitively believe that borders must be defended and that an army is ready and prepared to do so.

¹ Tombs, 1996, 202–03.

The term 'city' is similarly the object of anachronistic treatment. The fact that this word is used to denote both ancient Ur, on the Euphrates, and modern Los Angeles, and has continued to be employed without any significant change for thousands of years does not necessarily indicate that Ur and Los Angeles are similar and identical geographical entities, or that we may denote certain settlements as a 'city' on the basis of its accepted definition today, which includes the fulfilment of certain roles, the provision of specific services, the size of the population, and more. Use of the same word does not necessarily entail the existence of a single definition that can explain both of them at one and the same time.

Most studies and atlases devoted to the political geography of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem accept the 'borders' of the Crusader 'state' as an indisputable fact. Furthermore, until the 1950s there was an overwhelming consensus about the existence of a strategy aimed at defending these borders or passage along the 'road networks' which connected the cities of the Frankish realm. The fact that such borders and such a strategy are not even hinted at in the written sources of the time did not deter scholars, and many of them used the location of castles to draw the borders of the kingdom. Thus was a circular argumentation created: the castles were proof of the existence of a system of defence of which they were supposed to be part.

Another similar scholarly controversy is that conducted round the origin of the architectural style of Crusader castles, an issue first raised by Emmanuel Guillaume Rey more than 130 years ago and the French colonialist school of historians who followed him in the twentieth century, but one that still engages scholars to this very day. Rey promoted the theory that Crusader castles were the result of a fertile cross-breeding between Byzantine and Western military architecture. This claim fitted in well with the more general thesis pointing to close cultural interchange between the Frankish rulers and their subjects, and his desired colonialist approach which maintained that a similar cultural interchange was taking place in the colonies during his times.

T. E. Lawrence rejected this assertion on the basis of the very same archaeological remains and presented another Euro-centric theory which maintained that the Franks had nothing to learn from their Eastern subjects, and that the military architectural knowledge they brought with them from the West was far superior to that of the East. Later historians who held the same opinion also claimed that castles which had been built along Eastern models were greatly inferior to those which copied Western ones.

The historiographical issues first raised under the influence of the colonialist discourse, such as relations between the Franks and the local populations, the origins of the Crusader castles, or issues dealing with technological innovations, continued to engage the scholarly community in the twentieth century, sometimes in the guise of an anti-colonialist approach. Therefore, the anti-colonialist approach developed by Raymond Smail and Joshua Prawer remained, of course, within the bounds of the colonialist discourse, although they were the first to utterly reject a pro-colonialist stance.

Smail maintained that the French pro-colonialist model was developed to serve the needs of French national politics, pointing particularly to Madelain, who wrote during the First World War, as the first scholar to develop this thesis. Prawer, no less opposed to colonialist ideas than Smail, gave the discussion a more theoretical turn: he did not attribute pro-colonialist views specifically to French scholars. Nevertheless, he was more firmly committed than his colleague to the anti-colonialist discourse, continuing to profess it even when Smail no longer believed that it contributed to analysis and understanding of the Crusades. In addition, Prawer's historical interpretation of the Crusades was also always influenced by his Zionist outlook; his analysis of the reasons for the Franks' failure echoed the apologetics of the Zionist movement. His model can thus be construed as a sort of lesson that Israeli scholars should take to heart so as not to fall into the same pitfalls.

My historiographical analysis indicates that the nationalist and colonialist discourses still exert a dominating influence over students of the Crusades, and that the models first outlined over a century and a half ago to describe the nature of the Latin Kingdom and its borders are still widely accepted. Furthermore, some of the research questions, such as those dealing with Frankish settlement, their relations with the local population, and the role played by castles in the defence of the realm, are still at the very core of Crusader scholarship, even though more than a hundred years have passed since they – and the answers to them – were first broached. In all cases, they focused on the Frankish settlement in the East, its needs, and apprehensions, as well as on the cultural and architectural demands of its rulers.

In my 1998 volume on Frankish rural settlement I argued that the assumptions of Smail and Prawer – that the Franks did not settle in rural areas and did not engage in agriculture – had never really been examined. Additional fundamental suppositions embodied in their model have become so deeply rooted that almost no one challenges them. Thus the

following assumptions have become more or less axiomatic: the rural population was Muslim and hostile, the Franks were outnumbered, and their very existence in the East was constantly threatened. A re-reading of the written sources together with a study of the findings of archaeological excavations has led me to conclude the very opposite: there was extensive Frankish settlement in the East. Moreover, the written sources testify to a much larger population of native Christians than one would expect, and to coexistence between Frankish and local Christian settlements, even to the extent that there were some common places of worship. These conclusions and the spatial distribution to which I allude cannot be explained by means of the existing models – neither the French colonialist model of integration, nor the anti-colonialist model of segregation put forward by Prawer and Smail.

The present volume leads me to even wider conclusions. The excessive importance attached to the issues arising from the nationalist and colonialist discourses prevented the airing of issues no less central or significant. This does not mean that the issues raised by the previous models were not central or significant. Questions such as the origins of the concentric castles, the provenance of sophisticated weapons like the counterweight trebuchet, or the degree to which relations between the Franks and the local population influenced the types of Frankish settlements and their spatial distribution are still central and important issues. But, I argue, it is the dominance of a limited number of questions and their fantastic survival over such a long period of time that have had a degenerating effect on Crusader scholarship. It is impossible to reduce a field of research into such a limited number of questions and not to expect such degeneration. In my opinion, the presuppositions emanating from colonialist and nationalist ways of thinking led the research on Frankish settlement and the study of Frankish military architecture into dead ends.

Even contemporary efforts to provide new data intended to decide once and for all in favour of one viewpoint or the other may result in the exact opposite: they might distance us even more from a solution and strengthen the standing of the colonialist discourse. During the years in which I have been researching this book, several European expeditions have been engaged in detailed archaeological and architectural surveys of Crusader and Muslim castles in the Levant. Each expedition has its own well-defined objective: to document, study, and publish the detailed plans of this or that specific castle; but – so hope the scholars – the information collected by all of them, when taken together, might help to decide between the opposing theories. The data collected is of tremendous

importance, but, ironically, even this new archaeological effort continues the geographic demarcation of the old colonialist world. French expeditions are at work in Syria and Lebanon, while British researchers are conducting surveys in Israel and Jordan. While several of these expeditions are designated as joint teams of European and local archaeologists, in most cases they are led by European researchers and work is carried on with funds provided by European governments. Will such surveys be able to settle 'once and for all' the old colonialist controversy over the sources which influenced the building of medieval castles in the Levant? I think not. Despite the important new data being collected which, I have no doubt, will enable a more profound discussion of the issues in the future, it is in the very nature of such historical questions that they can never be answered absolutely one way or the other, and might even widen the hidden differences of opinion between Euro-centric scholars and scholars who believe in the genius of the East.

The view that has guided my present study tries to connect Frankish military architecture to the environment in which it was executed and attempts to argue against turning it into an architectural icon of a colonialist, patronising society, indifferent to its surroundings. Both the colonialist and anti-colonialist models assumed that military security was the all important aspect influencing Frankish life throughout their presence in the Levant. Therefore, all of them viewed almost every Frankish settlement as a 'castle' or a 'tower', ignoring the richness and diversity of medieval life, and interpreting the entire network of settlements as a chain of fortifications.

I have tried to show that diverse components were common to all medieval settlements and that fortifications are no different from agriculture or worship. Churches, fields, and towers were characteristic of all settlements in the Middle Ages and therefore cannot be used as criteria to define the nature of any specific settlement. In other words, just as one cannot point to 'ecclesiastical' or 'agricultural' settlements, so one cannot define a 'fortified settlement', for such a classification would have to include almost all medieval settlements.

Medieval castra and castella, therefore, should not be classified according to the quality and strength of their fortifications but on the basis of their relative size and the services they provided for the surrounding area. Medium-sized settlements, those which supplied services to nearby smaller ones, can be termed 'castles', or 'fortresses', even though some smaller settlements were also fortified, and even though the fortifications of some of those designated as 'castles' by modern scholars were rather

small and unimpressive. The term 'city' can be applied to the larger, and sometime more fortified, settlements, those which also served as a centre for smaller castles that were dependent upon them.

During the first seventy years of the Latin Kingdom, it was economic and geographic considerations, rather than strategic ones, which determined the location of central settlements (castles). If the Franks did take into account external dangers when deciding when and where to erect a castle, their influence was exerted in an opposite direction: very few were built in areas under danger of attack, the Franks choosing to erect most of the new castles in relatively secure regions. There was nothing original in this, at least in comparison with what was happening in Europe at the time. There, too, more fortified sites were established in areas of relative calm than in those under potential danger of attack, though some European sources – just like the Crusader chronicles – maintained that settlement contributed to the defence of Christianity and claimed that castles were built to prevent enemy raids.

In my opinion, most of the castles erected until the closing decades of the twelfth centuries were more in the nature of 'core settlements' and regional centres rather than central military strongholds. The castles were small and relatively unsophisticated structures enclosed by a single wall, the width of which generally did not exceed 3 metres. The average area of most of these castles was smaller than that of large manors or hall houses. The major differences in the geographic layout of castles and large manors stemmed from the additional regional functions which the former filled and from the existence of extensive agricultural settlement outside their walls.

Earlier models assumed – incorrectly, from both the historical and geographic viewpoints – that the Frankish settlers were subject to more or less constant danger throughout all of the kingdom and during its entire existence. The French model did describe the life of the Franks in the Levant in somewhat ideal terms, minimising the dangers which threatened them; that presented by Smail and Prawer painted a picture completely opposed – but no less extreme and unrealistic – to that of the French: the Latin Kingdom was constantly in danger of attack throughout its entire territory. The first provided explanations for settlement patterns and the spatial diffusion of the castles while overlooking real dangers and their geographical distribution; the second disregarded relatively lengthy periods of tranquillity and security in several areas of the kingdom. Neither can provide an explanation for the uniform distribution of castles throughout the entire country.

Such uniform distribution also contradicts the assumptions, so widely held, that the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem had more or less clearly defined linear borders, and that the purpose of the castles was to defend these borders. These two assumptions, which more than anything else are characteristic of the traces of the nationalist discourse in Crusader scholarship, do not hold water in the face of the geographic evidence, nor are they supported by written documentation.

The Kingdom of Jerusalem, like other medieval political entities, did not possess clearly delineated borders in the modern sense of that term. In the absence of an overall concept of political state sovereignty, there was as yet no need for, or any significance to, a borderline at which the attributes of sovereignty of one state came to an end and those of another began. The existence of centres and their radii of physical and economic control conditioned spatial concepts. Large centres belonging to one side threatened the enemy's large centres, and the region between them was considered an area of conflict. The establishment of a new large centre could have posed a threat to the very existence of the opponent's centre, but the economic, military, and ecclesiastical lines drawn between them – and there were many such lines – bore no political significance. Modern scholarship, influenced by its own nationalistic rhetoric, completely ignored evidence of such a condition, dividing the region between the Muslim and Frankish centres and creating an imaginary political border between them.

By turning Crusader castles into icons which symbolise in the deepest sense the essence of Frankish settlement in the Levant, Crusader scholarship has – not always justifiably – focused attention upon them and made them the central element in Frankish military strategy. It is doubtful if this concept, too, can stand in the face of the evidence. During the first decades of the Latin Kingdom, and even more so at the beginning of its second period, the Muslims mounted a relatively small number of sieges against Frankish castles. For many decades the Franks' army maintained absolute superiority in the battlefield. In most campaigns it was the Franks who took the initiative, attacking their enemy's centres of power. Many castles, especially those built in the heart of the kingdom, were never the object of Muslim attack and were not forced to defend themselves. In the few cases in which the Muslims did besiege a Frankish castle, its minimal fortifications were enough to enable the besieged to withstand the attack until the arrival of reinforcements. Even news of the rescue force's impending approach was enough, in most cases, to cause the Muslims to withdraw, fearing a frontal

engagement with the Franks' land forces and preferring to wait for another, more convenient opportunity.

Thus, we believe that during the kingdom's first seven decades, the defence potential of Frankish castles depended on the power of the kingdom's army, and not on proximity to a 'border' which did not exist in fact. True, there were a few instances in which Muslim forces raided this or that Frankish centre, but on most occasions it was Muslim centres which were raided and plundered by the Franks, and not the opposite. In any event, there was no significance at all to an 'international border' which supposedly separated the two sides.

None of this implies that there was absolutely no mutual influence between the Muslim and Frankish doctrines of warfare and fortification. The opposite is the case. The fighting between them, like any military doctrine, should be better depicted as an ongoing tactical and strategic dialogue between the two opponents. Paradoxically, such a dialogue is more vital during periods of military confrontation than in times of peace. If one side is inattentive to the innovations, capabilities, and stratagems of the other, the time will come when it will be defeated. Chroniclers conclude descriptions of many Frankish sieges by noting that at battle's end the routed Muslim forces went outside the walls of their castle or city to try to gain an understanding of the technological innovations that led to their downfall. In other cases, the sources depict how the Franks set their siege engines on fire to prevent the Muslims from copying their improved features, or explicitly state that even as the battle raged, the Muslims closely observed the Franks' siege machines.

During the first half of the twelfth century, the Franks had clear superiority in logistics as well as in the presence of expert craftsmen in the field; thus they could transport heavy wooden beams out of which they constructed advanced siege engines on the spot. The Muslims were not unacquainted with these engines, and also knew how to operate them, but the absence of improved means of transport and the absolute lack of carpenters and builders in their land forces prevented them from deploying such engines when attacking Frankish fortifications. The Muslims, however, were greatly superior in the number of archers and light cavalry. In the final tally, the dialogue between the two warring parties resulted in the Muslims learning from the Franks how to transport dismantled siege engines and heavy wooden beams to the battlefield, while the Franks learned how to combine increasingly larger forces of light cavalry and archers.

The situation changed radically when the balance of power was altered. When the Frankish land forces could no longer prevent the Muslims from mounting a siege, or were unable to tender military aid to besieged castles within a few days, Frankish castles began to fall to the Muslims. At first, these were castles in areas more distant from the heart of the kingdom, which now gradually became true 'frontier' areas. The transformation of a marginal area into a frontier is not the deterministic outcome of its proximity to enemy centres of power; rather it is the result of the relative strength of the two forces which enabled one of them to instigate more frequent and more dangerous attacks on the other. The beginning of the Frankish frontier, therefore, can be dated to the 1160s, when the kingdom's army was in Egypt and could not speedily come to the rescue of the castles attacked by Nur al-Din.

The Franks at first refused to admit that conditions had changed, preferring to accuse the garrisons of treason and of handing over the castles with whose defence they had been charged in return for monetary gain. Later, after the big castles at Baniyas and Hunin had fallen to the Muslims, the Franks came to realise that it was now necessary to defend with stone what the army could no longer rescue through reinforcements.

The concentric castle should be regarded, therefore, as a sophisticated and complicated piece of military technology, invented to prevent the Muslims from besieging and taking Frankish castles. The result was not an improvement of certain components of the older castles but a totally new, all-inclusive approach to castle defence, involving radical alterations to the earlier methods of military architecture. The new castles could withstand siege for longer periods of time and the safety of the garrisons was not dependent any more on the immediate arrival of reinforcements. The changes included a considerable heightening of walls and towers, the opening of gates and posterns to enable sorties, the deepening and widening of moats and *glacis*, the deployment of heavy artillery and war engines atop the walls, the storage of large quantities of foodstuffs and water, and last but not the least: the external addition of a second line of fortification. The construction of such a military site, or even the adaptation of an older castle to meet the new standards, was extremely expensive and required significant investments. The cost of constructing the very big concentric castle of Safad, between the 1240s and the 1250s, for example, exceeded 1.1 million gold pieces. The construction of such an edifice, and the investment of such sums, was not meant only to meet aesthetic or architectural fashions, but to provide the defenders with a

military technology that could ensure their survival. The construction of these edifices, and the military and economic need to complete the work in the shortest possible time, compelled the builders to plan them well in advance, and to adapt the location of the future installations to the specific needs of the defenders.

Construction of the concentric castles was therefore another chapter in the ongoing military dialogue between Franks and Muslims, but it was certainly not the concluding one. The adaptation of this technology was accompanied by a parallel transformation of Frankish military strategy, which altered and reshaped the balance of power between the two sides. The Franks gradually abandoned their traditional offensive strategy and, since the beginning of the 1180s, adopted a defensive way of thinking. The field combat abilities that had characterised them since their arrival in the East were rarely testified, and the armies relied to a greater extent on walls, moats, and towers.

During the decade which separated the battles of Montgisard, in November 1177, and Hattin, in July 1187, the military roles and strategies of both parties were gradually exchanged, each party assuming the role traditionally held by the other. The Franks were becoming defensive, and cautiously avoided showdowns, whereas the Muslims took the offensive, challenging their adversaries time and again to open field combat. Until the beginning of the 1180s the Muslims still avoided direct confrontations and Salah al-Din did his utmost to conclude sieges in the shortest possible time. But from the end of the truce of 1182 he realised that the Frankish armies preferred passive defence to active showdowns, and he was encouraged to exhibit his military prowess. During the mid-1180s he noted that the Franks preferred the shelter of their mighty castles, and hid behind their walls whenever possible. This observation became common knowledge in modern scholarship, although it is usually applied to earlier periods when such behaviour was not characteristic.

Frankish weakness encouraged the Muslims not only to besiege isolated Frankish frontier castles but also to initiate major combat with the main Frankish army on the Frankish domain. The Muslim armies failed in several of these battles, and the other planned showdowns were aborted because of the Frankish fear of the Muslims, but the audacity and dimensions of the Ayyubid armies increased constantly together with their abilities in siege-fare. In the mid-1180s the Muslims were already able to deploy movable towers and heavy artillery while besieging the Frankish castle of Karak. Another traditional superiority of the Frankish forces had vanished.

The concentric castles were, therefore, a major Frankish defensive advantage over their adversaries but at the same time also a major obstacle to the development of their traditional offensive tactics. The garrisons were better protected and could defend themselves more successfully, but the reliance upon a castle-dependent strategy led to the development of a rigid military policy and prevented them from freely attacking their foes.

The only remaining advantage of the Franks over the Muslims, one which continued to exist for several more decades, was their superior concentric castles. Bigger Muslim castles were developed only during the 1210s at Mt Tabor and during the late 1220s at al-Subayba, but these castles too were not comparable to the contemporary concentric castle of 'Athlit or the much simpler castle of Montfort. Muslim castle building only attained maturity and reached its peak during the early Mamluk period, when additional concentric walls were added to the earlier (some-time even concentric) Frankish castles of Karak, Shaubak, and Beaufort, or to the Ayyubid castles of al-Subayba and 'Ajlun. Similar walls were added later to Crac des Chevaliers and Safad.

This new phase of castle building represented Muslim recognition of the superiority of the concentric models but it reached an unmatched summit, even when compared to the most elaborate Frankish castles, when Bilik, a mamluk of the Sultan Baybars and his viceroy, refortified the Ayyubid castle of al-Subayba in 1274.²

Concentric castles, however, are still regarded by modern Western scholarship as being typically Frankish and were even gradually transformed into visual icons representing the Crusades themselves. The silhouette of the larger castles became emblematic of Frankish presence in the hostile East. But the silhouettes are misleading, for much of what is identified as being 'a big Crusader castle' are in fact external fortifications added by none other than the Muslim rulers after they took the castles from the Franks. This is true even of the external walls of the most 'typical' castles of Karak, Beaufort, Crac des Chevaliers, and Shaubak; the walls of Shaubak, which looks like 'a typical Crusader castle', do not contain even one section predating the Mamluk period.³

This well-known 'typical' silhouette of the 'Crusader castle' is to a large extent actually a Muslim castle identified as Frankish by later scholars or popular opinion. In an article published fifteen years ago, I already

² Amitai, 1989, 11–119; Amitai, 2001, 109–23.

³ For the rebuilding of Karak, Shaubak, Qaqun, Beaufort, Safad, al-Subayba, Crac des Chevaliers, and other sites, see Ibn Shaddad, *Ta'rikh al-Zahir*, 351–60; Yunini, 11, 259–60, 343, 361.

encountered this problem: the castle of al-Subayba was considered a 'Frankish castle' although it is not mentioned by any twelfth-century Latin or Arabic source, and although there is no real reason to assume that it was built by the Franks and not by the Muslims.⁴ Evidently, European scholars found it difficult to believe that such a beautiful fortress was built by the Muslims and not by the Franks. Many scholars went to the trouble of convincing themselves that whenever the city of Baniyas is mentioned, the reference is actually to the castle of al-Subayba which, therefore, was '*francized*'.⁵

The same is also true in the case of the Mamluk citadel of Jerusalem built by Tankiz, the Mamluk governor of Jerusalem during the reign of Nasir Muhammad Ibn Qalaun. But its Mamluk fourteenth-century layout is depicted in practically all the atlases and modern descriptions of the Frankish siege of Jerusalem as being identical with the Tower of David, which the Crusaders captured. These scholars do not claim that the Franks built the citadel, but their representation indirectly glorifies the Frankish conquest. If we follow this line of thought, we will inevitably reach the conclusion that the Mamluk sultan Baybars, who re fortified many of the Frankish castles, was the greatest builder of 'Crusader castles'.

The transformation of the Crusader concentric castle into an icon representing the Frankish presence in the East, that occurred more than 130 years ago, continues to exist, as does the application of colonialist concepts back to the Middle Ages. Old images, originating in the colonialist and nationalist ways of thinking, are not easily erased, and the Crusades are still rationalised to a great extent on the basis of nationalist and colonialist intellectual conventions. Until the 1950s, the Crusades were read as nationalist and a pre-figuration of a positive colonialist endeavour; later it was anti-colonialist viewpoints which influenced the study of the Crusades; and today we even hear some voices presenting the Crusades as an early example of the deterministic clash of Eastern and Western civilisations.

These ideological viewpoints did enrich to some degree scholarly thinking about the Crusades – and some of them continue to do so – but in the long run they have narrowed down Crusader historiography.

⁴ Ellenblum, 1989; Amitai, 2001.

⁵ Kitchener, 1877, 173: 'This is the finest ruined castle I have seen in the Country'; Edward Robinson, who overtly despised Muslim culture, actually doubted even the medieval origin of the fort, claiming that it was of a Phoenician origin. Robinson and Smith, 1841, 403–04; Van Berchem, 1888, 440–70; Graboïs, 1970, 43–62.

Viewing the Crusades mainly through the nationalist, colonialist, or post-colonialist prisms, or even through modern viewpoints which tend to reduce them to a deterministic clash of civilisations, reduce the variety of the questions asked, and lead one to disregard the richness of meetings, friendly or violent, between cultures. In fact, many fields of medieval life – castles, military strategy, economy or agriculture – were all the result of an ongoing dialogue, itself the outcome of the meeting and competition between two cultures, or encountering new physical conditions. Every bit of construction, every act of war, every tree that was planted and field that was tilled, were outcomes of such a dialogue. Frankish farmers who arrived in the Levant as emigrants could not have survived, even for a short while, without the help and experience of local farmers. Irrigation of crops, new species of plants, differences between Europe and the Levant in the seasons for sowing, reaping, and plowing, all these had to be learned and they necessitated daily dialogue with the local population.

Such a dialogue was even more important and vital under conditions of war. A lack of knowledge and understanding of the enemy's tactics and technologies could be disastrous. The master builders of European castles had to adapt themselves to the military tactics of their new Muslim adversaries, and once the Franks had erected castles intended to withstand such tactics they then had to provide an answer to newer strategies developed by the enemy, and this cycle repeated itself.

Nationalist and colonialist ways of thinking tend to interpret such intercultural relations as being entirely dichotomous. There are always two opposing camps, and in our case it is the Frankish camp – interpreted sometimes unconsciously as being 'ours' – and the Muslim camp – usually playing the role of the 'other' and the 'enemy'. Native Christians often filled the typically colonialist position of the unreliable 'natives' who were regarded nonetheless as being an integral part of the Frankish, or 'our', camp. This dichotomous way of thinking cannot be denied when a violent war is discussed. A war is usually an event in which two opposing, suspicious, and mutually hating societies are trying to destroy each other. But military tactics, siege-fare, and castle building should be interpreted differently. They are not independently developed phenomena, but are the result of an ongoing dialogue, and the result is the accumulative effort of the two opposing cultures.

It should not be assumed from the foregoing discussion, however, that there was a cultural dialogue between the Muslims and the Franks in all possible fields. Such a sweeping generalisation, like others of its kind, will

be no less shallow and narrow than generalisations which treat the relationship between Islam and Christianity as a 'clash of civilisations'. There were many spheres in which the dialogue between the two cultures was extensive and vital and could not be dispensed with, like the dialogue between Franks and Muslims in the fields of economy, agriculture, and warfare, the results of which were not uniquely Frankish or Muslim. But there were also many other spheres, such as those of art, theology, family life, and more, in which the cultural dialogue developed at a much slower pace or not at all.

The Crusader castles, which in time became the visual expression *par excellence* of Frankish civilisation in the Levant, could not have developed in a vacuum, unconnected to the military tactics of land battles, the essence of the frontier, and the different capabilities of the two adversaries. Therefore, they should be regarded also as the most evident visual expression of the cultural dialogue between East and West. Not because one of the sides 'borrowed' an architectural expression from the other but because they were the outcome of a lengthy, ongoing dialogue between two schools of military tactics and approaches.

Appendix

Sites recognized as towers or castles by modern scholars or medieval sources

	Name	G. R.	Conquest, construction first mentioned	Major reconstruction	Destruction
1	Abu-Gosh, ¹ <i>Castellum Emaus, Terra Emaus</i>	160\134	1141	1187	
2	Afeq, ² <i>Recondane</i>	160\250	1154		
3	'Affula ³	177\224			
4	'Ain Siniya ⁴	171\153			
5	'Aizariya, ⁵ <i>Bethania, St Lazarus</i>	174\131	1102	1143	
6	Akhziv, ⁶ <i>Casale Imbert</i>	159\272	1123	1154	
7	'Akko	157\258	1104	1110-15; 1192; 1250	1187; 1291
8	Al-'Al ⁷	228\236	1105		1106
9	Kh. Aliya ⁸	174\269	13s c.		
10	'Aqaba <i>Ailat</i> ⁹	150\881	1115		
11	'Aqraba ¹⁰	182\170			
12	'Ar'ara <i>Castrum planorum</i>	158\212	13s c.		
13	'Ara <i>Castellum Areamum</i>	157\212	1182		
14	Tell Arshaf ¹¹ <i>Arsur</i>	132\178	1101	1241	1187
15	Ashdod-Yam, ¹² <i>Minat al-Qal'a, Castellum Beroart</i>	114\132	1153; 13s c.		
16	Ashqelon <i>Ascalon</i>	107\119	1153	1192	1187; 1192
17	'Ateret ¹³ <i>Vadum Iacob</i>	209\267	1178		1179
18	'Athlit; <i>Castellum Peregrinorum</i> ¹⁴	144\234	1218		1291
19	Azor, ¹⁵ <i>Casel des Plains</i>	131\159	1131-48	1191	
20	Baniyas <i>Belinas</i>	215\294	1129; 1139	1157	1132; 1164
21	Bayt 'Itab ¹⁶ <i>Bethuatap</i>	155\126	1161		1187
22	Bayt Jubir ¹⁷	191\139	1172		
23	Bayt Kika ¹⁸	169\135			
24	Bayt Nuba	153\140			

25	Bayt Safafa <i>Bethafava</i> ¹⁹				
26	Baytuniya <i>Beitiumen</i>				1187
27	Bayt 'ur al-Fauqa, ²⁰ <i>Bethoron Superior</i>				1187
28	Beaufort ²¹				
29	Beirut, ²² <i>Baruth</i>				
30	Beit Dagan ²³	169\128	1110		
31	Beit Guvrin, ²⁴ <i>Bethgibelin</i>	166\143	1099		
32	Beit Shean, ²⁵ <i>Bethsan</i>	160\143	12th c.		
33	Belhacem, Qal'at Abu'l-Hasan ²⁶	200\303	1139		
34	Bethphage	130\127	1110	1240–60	1190; 1268
35	Bethlehem ²⁷	133\156		1197; 1205	1187; 1291
36	Bil'ama, ²⁸ <i>Castellum Belesimum</i>	140\112	1134		
37	Al-Bira, ²⁹ <i>Magna Mahomeria</i>	197\211	1099 1183		1187
38	Bir Zayt ³⁰	120\181	1128		
39	Bombrac Bne Brac	?:			
40	Al-Burj <i>Castrum ficuum</i> ³¹	169\123	1099		
41	Al-Burj ³²	177\205	1156		
42	Al-Burj Sansan ³³	170\146	1099, c. 1124		1187
43	Al-Burj ³⁴	168\153			
44	Al-Burj al-Ahmar, <i>Le Tour rouge</i>	133\160	1187		1187
45	Burj Bardawil ³⁵	141\094			
46	Burj Baytin ³⁶ <i>Bethel</i>	169\148			
47	Burj Bayt-Nasif ³⁷	152\122			
48	Burj al-Far'ah ³⁸	167\136			
49	Burj al-Habis, Qal'at Tantura <i>Giif</i> ³⁹	146\182	1123–50		
50	Burj al-Kibli ⁴⁰	173\156			
51	Burj al-Lissana ⁴¹	172\148	1138–59		
52	Burj al-Malh ⁴²	151\110			
53	Burj Ash-Shamali ⁴³	183\188			
54	Burj Sinjil ⁴⁴	152\145	1136		
55	Burj as-Sur, Bethsura ⁴⁵	172\295			
		174\156			
		193\193			
		172\296			
		173\161			
		159\110	1136		

Table (*cont.*)

	Name	G. R.	Conquest, construction first mentioned	Major reconstruction	Destruction
56	Caesarea <i>Cesaire</i>	140\212	1110	1228; 1251	1187; 1265
57	Castrum Feniculi	Sharon??	1228		
58	Dabburiya, ⁴⁶ <i>Buria</i>	185\233	1101; <1182		1101; <1182
59	Da'uq, Casale Doc, Castiel Doc	161\253	1191–1200		
60	Dayr al-Asad, <i>St George de Lebaene</i>	175\259	1161–79		
61	Dayr Abu-Mash' ⁴⁷	156\156	1161		1187
62	Dayr al-Balah, ⁴⁸ <i>Daron</i>	088\092	1160s; 1170		1187, 1192
63	Dayr Mar Saba	181\123		1170–87	
64	Dayr al-Quruntal, ⁴⁹ <i>Quarantene</i>	190\142	1116		
65	Dhahiriya	148\092			
66	Dor, <i>Merle</i>	142\224	12th c.		1187, 1192
67	Gaza, ⁵⁰ <i>Gadres</i>	199\101	1150	1170?	1187, 1192
68	Gezer, Tell Montgisard	143\140	1155		
69	al-Habis	162\130			
70	Habis Jaldiak, ⁵¹ Al Habis, <i>Cava de Suet</i>	228\236	1109	1113; 1118; 1182	1109; 1118; 1182; 1187
71	Habonim, ⁵² Kafr-Lam, <i>Cafarlet</i>	144\227	8th c.; 1099; 1201		
72	Haifa, ⁵³ <i>Caiphas</i>	150\246	1099	1252	1187
73	Hanaton, ⁵⁴ Tell al-Badawiya	174\243			
74	Hebron, ⁵⁵ <i>St Abraham</i>	160\103	1099		1187
75	Holy Cross Monastery	11th c.	1099		
76	Hunin, ⁵⁶ <i>Chastel Neuf</i>	201\291	1107–15	1178	1167; 1187
77	I'blin ⁵⁷	168\247			
78	Ieh'am Qal'at Jidin, Iudyn	171\266	13 th c.		1270?
79	Jaba ⁵ <i>Gabaa</i>	174\140	1179		
80	Jaladiya ⁵⁸	126\122			

81	Jazirat Farā'un, ⁵⁹ <i>Isle de Graye</i>	136\875	1116–17	1170
82	Jericho ⁶⁰	193\140	1099; 1112	1187
83	Jerusalem	170\132	1099	1187; 1244
84	Jifna Jafenia	170\152	1182	1187
85	Jinin Le Grand Gerin	178\207	1182	1184; 1187
86	Kafr Jinnis ⁶¹	141\156		
87	Karak, ⁶² <i>Grac</i>	216\666	1142	11188
88	Karaiya Galatie, La	124\116		
89	Karmil <i>Carmel</i> ⁶³	162\692	1173	1187
90	Khan Khatrura Maldoim, Maldouin, <i>Castrum Dumi</i>	184\136	<1170s	1187
91	Kh. Khuljan	163\206		
92	Kokav Hayarden Belvoir, Coquet, Kaukab al-Hawa	199\222	1168	1189
93	H. Kones; Capharnaum	146\241		
94	Lajjun Legio	??		
95	Latrun Toron des Chevaliers	148\137	1141–37	
96	Lod, ⁶⁴ Lydda, <i>St George de Lielde</i>	140\151	1099	1187
97	Ma'abarot, ⁶⁵ Madd ad-Dayr, <i>Montdidier</i>	141\196	1158	
98	H. Manot, al-Manawat, Manueth	164\271	<1169	
99	Marecalcie	???		
100	Kh. Maslakhit Miscalim	182\248		
101	Mazra'a Lemezera ⁶⁶	159\265	1220	
102	Mazra'a Le Meseraa	143\222		
103	Merhaviya La Féve	179\223	1170s	#1170s
104	Mevaseret Zion; al-Qastal, Belveer?	164\134	1168	
105	Mezad Abirim; Burj Mistr ⁶⁷	177\272		
106	Mezad Rahav Raheb?	1180\275		
107	Migdal Afed, ⁶⁸ Majdal Yaba, Mirabel	146\165	1122	
108	Mi'iliya, ⁶⁹ <i>Castellum Regis</i>	174\260	1160	1187
109	Mons Glavianus	1137\217	1125	
110	Montfort	171\272	1227	

Table (*cont.*)

	Name	G. R.	Conquest, construction first mentioned	Major reconstruction	Destruction
111	An-Nabi-Samwil, <i>Mons Gaudii</i>	157\137	11508; 1155; 1157		
112	Nablus, ⁷⁰ <i>Naples</i>	175\181	1099; 1110-18		1187
113	Nahal Siah St Brocardus	147\245			
114	Nairaba, ⁷¹ <i>Munitio Mabbe?</i>	159\191	1110-18		
115	Netaniya Umm Khalid, <i>Castellum Rogerii Longobardi</i>	137\193	1135		
116	Petra	192\972			
117	Qalansuwa, ⁷² <i>Calansue</i>	149\177	11208; 1128		
118	Qal'at al-Dubba	198\289			
119	Qaqun, ⁷³ <i>Caco</i>	149\196	1123		1187; 1265
120	Qarawat Bani Hasan Burj al-Yaqr	159\170			
121	H. Qarhata	??			
122	Qarta, ⁷⁴ <i>Casale Destreiz</i>	145\234	1212, 11208		
123	Qasr Ash-Shaikh Raba	180\199			
124	Qidna, ⁷⁵	140\117			
125	Al-Qubayba	162\138	1159		1187
126	Qula Cola	146\160			
127	Quruntal Templar Castle	191\143			
128	Ar-Ram, ⁷⁶	172\140	1160		1187
129	Ramalla Ramelie	168\145			
130	Ramla, ⁷⁷ <i>Rames</i>	138\148	1099	1101	1187
131	Regba As-Saumariya, Somelaria	159\264	13 th c.		
132	H. Rosh Mayim, Rushmiya	150\243	1165		1187
133	Rujm As-Syigh	195\169			
134	Sabastiya, ⁷⁸ <i>Sebaste</i>	168\186	1128-45		

135	Safad, <i>Saphet</i>	196\263	1101?	1168, 1240	1188, 1266
136	Samu ² , Samoe	156\089			
137	<i>Scandalion</i> , ⁷⁹ Iskandaruna	165\284	1117	1148	1187
138	Schaubak, ⁸⁰ Montreal	203\993	1115	1142; 1168	1188
139	Shefar ² am Shafa-Amru, Le Saffran	166\245	125 c.		1187, 1291
140	Sidon, ⁸¹ <i>Saieta</i>	184\330	1110	1228, 1253	1189
141	Sinjil St Egidius	175\160	1150		1187
142	St John the Baptist	201\138			11708
143	Ti ² innik Taanoch	?			
144	At-Tabgha Tabula Domini	201\252			
145	Mt Tabor	187\232	1099, 1106	11208	1187
146	At-Taiyba Effraon, Castrum Sancti Helie	178\151	<1156		1187
147	At-Taiyba Forbelet	192\223	1182		1187
148	Tell Akko Toron	158\258			
149	Tiberias ⁸²	201\243	1099	1241	1187
150	Tibnin, ⁸³ Toron	188\289	1107		
151	Kh. Tin ² ama Tymini	146\247?			
152	At-Tira St Iohan de Tire	148\241			
153	Tsova Suba, Belmont	162\132	1169, 11508		1187
154	Kh. at-Tuqu ² Thecua	170\115	1099		1187
155	Turris Salinarium, Burj al-Malih ⁸⁴	141\216	1168		1187
156	Tyre <i>Tyr</i>	168\297	1124	1212	1187
157	‘Uaiyra, ⁸⁵ <i>Li Vaux Moise</i>		1116		1144; 1145; 1188
158	Yaffo, ⁸⁶ Jaffa, <i>Japhe</i>	126\162	1099; 1100	1191; 1228; 1253	1187
159	Yalu <i>Chastel Hernaut</i>	152\138	1132–33		1187
160	Yarkon Molendina Trium Pontium	143\167			
161	Yavne, ⁸⁷ Ibelin	126\141	1141		1187
162	Yizre’el, Zir’in, Petit Gerin, Zarin	181\218	?? 11708		
163	Yoque ² am, ⁸⁸ Caymont	160\230	1110–18		1187
164	Az-Zababida	180\199			
165	Zafit, As-Safi, <i>Blanchegarde</i>	135\123	1142		#1142

Table (cont.)

	Name	G. R.	Conquest, construction first mentioned	Major reconstruction	Destruction
166	Zippori Le Saforie	176\239			

Notes:

* (Some of the major sites, and some of the *castella* or *castri* were not footnoted)

¹ See Hospital, no. 139, 24 May 1150, 113-14; no. 173, 1 February 1147, 135-36; no. 192, 24 May 1150, 149-50; Ellenblum, 1998, 109-18; Pringle, 1993, 7-17.

² The mill is first mentioned in Hospital, no. 225, 7 July, 1154, 172 (= Röhricht, *Regesta*, no. 293).

³ Sukenik, 1948.

⁴ *SWP*, II, 291: 'Small Crusader Fort'.

⁵ Luke 10, 38-42; John 11.1: *Castellum Mariae et Marthe*. For the fourth-century Byzantine church see Eusebius, *Onomasticon*, 59. For the continuity in the use of the church see Adomnan, *CCSL*, CLXXV, 202. In the eleventh century see Yahyā ibn Sa'īd *PO*, xxiii, 487-88. The date of the fortified monastery is not clear, but the monastery is mentioned already by Seawulf, 68-71, already in 1102-03.

⁶ Delaborde, no. 12, 1123, 37 (Röhricht, *Regesta*, no. 101); Josaphat, no. 17, 19.10.1125, 125-27; For the place being a castle, see Imād al-Dīn al-Isfahānī, 111, l. 3; 35, l. 8; 187, l. 14; 324, l. 6; Abu Shāma, II, 87, l. 35; 88, l. 34; 142, l. 10-11; 183, l. 4; 184, l. 1-2; The village was first mentioned in 1123, but the settlement charter was signed only in February, 1153. See Strehlke, no. 1, 26.

⁷ Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, pp. 71-72.

⁸ *SWP*, I, 170: Tower.

⁹ Yāqūt, Mu'jam, 1:292 'City of the Jews. God forbade them from fishing on Saturday, they disobeyed him and he turned them into monkeys and pigs.' The castle referred to was only the sea castle, see Abu Shāma, 1:191; Ibn Wāsil, Mufaridj, 199; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzi, ed. Hyderabad, 283.

¹⁰ *SWP*, II, 386

¹¹ Roll *et al.*, 2000;

¹² Beyer, 1946-51, 256, 260, 263; Röhricht, *Regesta*, no. 472. Pringle, 1997, no. 153.

¹³ Ellenblum, 2003; Barber, 1998.

¹⁴ Johns, 1947.

- ¹⁵ Mentioned for the first time by an anonymous pilgrims who visited Samaria between 1131 and 1148. Sandoli, *Itinera*, II, 109. An anonymous chaplain witnessed charters in 1158 and 1160. Holy Sepulchre, no. 51, 136–38, 1158; and no. 53, 140–42, 1160. A fortification is mentioned there for the first time in 1191 when the templars rebuilt it after the destruction wrought upon the place by Salah al-Din, see *Gesta Regis Ricardi*, 289–90; Ambroise, lines, 7177–7213; Pringle refers to Casel des Plains together with Castellum Arnaldi and Latrun, as a chain of fortifications protecting the road to Jerusalem, although those three sites never existed together, at least not as Templar fortifications. See Pringle, 1998; Abel, 1927.
- ¹⁶ *SWP*, III, 22–24.
- ¹⁷ *SWP*, III, 190–91.
- ¹⁸ Gazetteer, 1929.
- ¹⁹ Röhrich, *Regesta*, no. 57 of September 1110; Pringle, 1997, 28–29 (no. 37).
- ²⁰ Benvenisti, 1970, 232–33.
- ²¹ Rey, 1871, pp. 127–39, pl. xiii; Deschamps, 1939, 176–208.
- ²² For the siege of Beirut in 1110, see William of Tyre, II, 13, 515–16; see also Le Strange, 1890, 408.
- ²³ *SWP*, II, 251.
- ²⁴ WT 24, 22, 659–61; *RRH*, no. 201, 50 (1141). Between 1153 and 1160 the 32 families living in the burgus next to the castle were given a charter by the master Raymond Le Puy, see Hospital, no. 399, 272–73 and no. 509, p. 350; Prawer, *Crusader Institutions*, 119–26.
- ²⁵ William of Tyre, 22, 27 (26), 1050–01: 'It is now reduced to almost nothing, with only a few scattered inhabitants, only a sparsely settled hamlet situated in a marshy place (solo opidulo, quod in paludibus situm est) . . . [T]he people dwelling there were well supplied with arms and food . . . yet they felt no confidence in the defenses of their citadel (presidium) . . . therefore, they abandoned the fortress (castrum).'.
- ²⁶ Rey, 1883, 511.
- ²⁷ For the miserable state of the monastery prior to the Frankish occupation, see *Commemoratorium*, 303. For the existence of a high wall surrounding the monastery, already during the visit of Daniel the Abbot in 1106, see Raba, 49.
- ²⁸ *SWP*, II, 51–52.
- ²⁹ Granted to the Holy Sepulchre by Godfrey, Fulcher of Chartres, III, 33 describes it as a little village, *uitulus*; in 1124 it was devastated by an Egyptian raid, the population taking refuge in a tower, William of Tyre, 13, 12, 600 and Fulcher of Chartres, III, 33, 1–2. For the existence of a curia and a steward, see Holy Sepulchre, n. 123, 249–50; also Pringle, 1985, 151–57.
- ³⁰ *SWP*, II, 329; Pringle, 1986a, 19–20.
- ³¹ *SWP*, III, 274; Pringle, 1997, 37 (no. 59): 'Castle'.
- ³² Gazetteer, 1929, 85.
- ³³ *SWP*, III, 91: 'Tower'.
- ³⁴ Gazetteer, 1929, 8; *SWP*, III, 110.

- ³⁵ *SWP*, II, 306–07; Gazetteer, 1929, 26; Pringle, 1994a: ‘Castle’.
- ³⁶ *SWP*, II, 307; Clermont-Ganneau.
- ³⁷ *SWP*, III, 314, 324, 351: ‘Tower’.
- ³⁸ *SWP*, II, 234–35: ‘Castle’.
- ³⁹ Pringle, 1997, 35–36 (no. 57) ‘Tower’.
- ⁴⁰ *SWP*, I, 57–58: ‘Tower’.
- ⁴¹ *SWP*, II, 307–09.
- ⁴² *SWP*, III, 235–36; Gazetteer, 1929, 27; Pringle, 1997, 40 (no. 66), ‘Castle’.
- ⁴³ *SWP*, I, 48, 58: ‘Tower’.
- ⁴⁴ *SWP*, II, 307: ‘Tower’.
- ⁴⁵ *SWP*, III, 311–12.
- ⁴⁶ For the ‘suburbium’ and the custom of Buria, see Prawer, *Crusader Institutions*, p. 136; for the tower see *WT*, 23, 15 (14), 1027–28.
- ⁴⁷ *SWP*, II, 290, ‘Castle’.
- ⁴⁸ When Salah al-Din attacked it, in 1170, the castle was already complete and the inhabitants were able to take refuge in it. *WT*, 20, 19, 937.
- ⁴⁹ For the place being ‘a very big cave’ only see Abbot Daniel, Raba, 45; for the community of monks living there already in 1116, Holy Sepulchre, no. 94, pp. 211–12 from May 1116.
- ⁵⁰ For the reconstruction of part of the fortifications of Gaza in 1149 and for the delivery of the site to the Templars see William of Tyre, 17, 12, 776 and William of Tyre, 20, 20, 938.
- ⁵¹ For the story of the conquest and the attempt to destroy it already in 1118, see Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil, x 544, line 1. Sibṭ Ibn al-Jauzi claims that the castles existed even in the year 1101–02 (505) as a big Muslim castle, *Min’at al-Zaman*, p. 38, line 16.
- ⁵² The place was sold by the lord of Caesarea to the Hospitaliers, Röhricht, *Regesta*, 866 1233.
- ⁵³ Nassir-I-Khosrau describes it as a village, Sefer Nameh, 18 (Persian text), 60 (translation); for the conquest, see Albert of Aachen, 7, 22, 519–23; translation Sancti Nicolai, cap. XLI–XLIII, 276–78; Baudry of Dol, 111; the author of the *Gesta Francorum*, p. 87, already describes Haifa as a *Castrium*. Al-Qalqashandi, xiv, 55 also describes it as a fortress (Hisn) and a burgus. El-Ad, 1980.
- ⁵⁴ Guérin, I, 490–1.
- ⁵⁵ For the size of the small ‘city as small as a village’ see Ibn Shaddad who quotes Ibn Haukal, p. 239. For the existence of a castle there as early as 1099 see Albert of Aachen, 12, 22, 703 (‘praesidium Sancti Abrahae’) and 12, 28, 708 (‘ubi castellum et sepultura sanctorum Patriarcharum’).
- ⁵⁶ The Herodian precinct might have served as a castle, or the castle was built next to the precinct. See Vincent, Mackay, and Abel, 163.
- ⁵⁷ According to Ibn Shaddad al-Halabi, Hunin was first constructed together with Tibnin in 1106; see Ibn Shaddad, 151; see also Ibn al-Furat, trans. Lyons, 123; Al-Qalqashandi, IV, 152.
- ⁵⁸ Guérin, I, 420–1; Gazetteer, 1929, 43: ‘Castle’.

⁵⁸ *SWP*, II, 418: 'Tower'.

⁵⁹ For the former settlement of Ayla see Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 84; Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, 272; Isakhrī, *Masālik al-mamālik*, 33; Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-Ta'āsimi*, 178: 'A port city next to the ruined Ayla. The new city is also popularly known as Ayla'; Fulcher of Chartres, II, 56; William of Tyre, II, 29, 542–43. Arab sources mention only the Island castle south to Ayla. See Abu Shama, *Raudatayn*, I, p. 191; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzi, *Mir'at al-Zaman*, p. 283, I, 15; Maqrīzi, *Khitat*, 298–301; Ibn Wasil, p. 138, I, 15.

⁶⁰ According to Abu al-Fida', Taqwīm, 243: 'The city of Jericho is [actually] a village.' Abbot Daniel: 'Once a very big and strong city . . . now a Saracen village' Raba, 44; a viccomes is mentioned there already in 1124; see Holy Sepulchre, no. 94, 8.4.1124, pp. 211–12. For the site being given by the Patriarch Arnulf as a dowry to his niece Emma for her marriage, see *WT*, II, 15, 519; for a tower which was re-used by the Russians to build their church, see Clermont Ganneau, 1899, pp. 40 and 16.

⁶¹ *SWP*, II, 265; Guérin, II, 392: 'Tower'.

⁶² For the construction of the castle by Pagan the Butler in 1142, see William of Tyre, 15, 21, 703–04; for the existence of an earlier monastery there, see Ibn al-Furat, trans. Lyons, section 61, 50–51, *sub anno*, 661; For the existence of a suburbium there see also William of Tyre, 22, 29 (28), 1055–57.

⁶³ Pringle, 1997, 61 (no. 126); *SWP*, III, 312; 372–74: 'Tower'.

⁶⁴ The Egyptians who reached the place in 1102, refrained from attacking it because of the mighty fortifications, Fulcher of Chartres, II, 153–4; in 1177, the inhabitants of the place found refuge on the roof of the church. See William of Tyre, 21, 20 (21), 989.

⁶⁵ Pringle, 1986a, 37–39, believes that Kh. Madd ad-Dair (which he labels a 'tower') is *Casale Latinae* and *Casale quod fuit Eustachii* and that the same village was given to the Abbey of St May Latin in Jerusalem already in 1105; *SWP*, II, 140.

⁶⁶ *SWP*, I, 147; Hubatsch, 1966, 197.

⁶⁷ Hellenistic site described by *SWP*, I, 167 as a Crusader tower; see also Pringle, 1997, 43 (no. 75).

⁶⁸ Pringle, 1997b.

⁶⁹ Ellenblum, 1996a.

⁷⁰ Baudry of Dol, 100 testifies to the existence of a citadel during the conquest of the city; see also *Gesta Francorum*, 93. The citadel was probably strengthened after the sack of the city in June 1113 (see Fulcher of Chartres, II, 49) and before the raid of 1137. During the second assault the inhabitants were able to take refuge in the *presidium*. See *WT*, 14, 27, 666–67. It was probably built during the reign of Baldwin I as attested in the *Gesta Francorum* (ed. *RHC*, 3, 543) which lists among the *munitiones* constructed by this king the *Turris Neapolitana*, see also *RRH*, no. 201, 50.

⁷¹ *Malue* appears in the list of *munitiones* constructed by Baldwin I, See *RHC*, 3, 543.

⁷² Qalansuwa was a station on the ancient road from Lajjun to Ramla, see Maqrīzi, trans. Quatremère, I, 2, 274; a document from 8 April 1128 describes the transfer of a *castel appellé Kalensu*, *situé dans le terroir de Césarée* from a certain knight, Geoffrey of Flujeac, to the Hospital, in the presence of Baldwin II. Unfortunately, the Charter survived only in an eighteenth-century inventory; see Pringle, 1986a, 42.

⁷³ The village was held already in 1110 by Eustace Garnier as a part of his lordship of Caesarea, see Hospital no. 20, 1110, 21–22. The castle is first mentioned in May 1123 when the constable of the realm Eustace Garnier gathered the army there. See Fulcher of Chartres, III, 18, 1, 664–65: ‘ante castellum quoddam quod Cacho incolae regionis nominant, see also WT, 12, 21, 572: in campestribus Cesaree in loco, cui Caco nomen, conueniunt...’ However, the upper part of the tower described in length by Pringle as a Crusader tower is most probably a late thirteenth-century Muslim one.

⁷⁴ Baldwin I was badly wounded there in 1103, William of Tyre, 10, 25 (26), 485 and in a later date in the twelfth century a fort was built there; Oliverus, 169: ‘Towards the east there is a strong tower, previously built by the Templars and held by them in time of war as well as peace.’ See also, Johns, 1947, 16–17; *SWP*, I, 288, 309–10: ‘Tower’; Ronen and Olami, Map of Athlit, 51–52, no. 87, fig. 1–8.

⁷⁵ *SWP*, III, 258; 288: ‘Fortified building’.

⁷⁶ See Pringle, 1983, 160–74; Holy Sepulchre, no. 43, 25 July 1150.

⁷⁷ Of the fortification campaign during the reign of al Walid, see Ibn Shaddad, p. 182: about the greatness of the city in 1047, see Nāṣir-I Khusaw who describes the city as ‘a great city, with strong walls built of stone, mortared of great height and thickness, with iron gates opening therein’. Le Strange, p. 306. According to WT, 10, 16 (17), 472–74 *sub anno* 1101, the city ‘was a populous city, surrounded by a wall with towers [turribus et muro circumdata valido] . . . people flocked to it in great numbers. But it had neither outer defenses nor a moat [nec antemurali cingebatur aut vallo urbe relicta], and . . . all of the inhabitants left and fled to Ascalon, which had far better fortifications [Ibn Shaddad, 182 ‘to Jerusalem’]. So the Christians merely fortified a stronghold with walls and a moat in one part of it [in quadam parte eius castrum muris et vallo communierunt]. See Fulcher of Chartres 2, 10, 1–2, II, 2 and 4–7 and 10–11 and 14–15, p. 405–15. See also Albert of Aachen, 9, 2–9.6, 591–94. William of Tyre, 10, 20 (21), 478–79.

⁷⁸ Kedar, 1994.

⁷⁹ The place was mentioned as a fortress already in the tenth century, Le Strange 1890, 458; for the castle constructed there by Baldwin I, see William of Tyre, II, 30, 543; Fulcher of Chartres, II, 605–06. In 1148 the site was the caput of the region, which was an integral part of the royal domain, see Favreau, 1977; Tibble, 1989, 52; see also *Gesta Francorum* (ed. *RHC*, 3, 543) which lists the *munitions* constructed by Baldwin I and which lists among them *Scandalion*.

⁸⁰ See WT, II, 26, 535; *Gesta Francorum* (ed. *RHC*, 3, 543) lists the *munitions* constructed by Baldwin I and which lists among them *Mons Regalis*.

An inscription dated to 1118 testifies to the accuracy of these testimonies, see Sandoli, *Corpus inscriptionum*, p. 332, appx. n. 4.

⁸¹ For the existence of walls, see William of Tyre, II, 14, 517–19; Nāṣir-i Khosrau, *Le Strange*, 1890, 346.

⁸² Razi and Braun, 216–27, 1992.

⁸³ For the construction of the castle, see William of Tyre, II, 5, 502–03; for the castle being famous see William of Tyre, 21, 26 (27), 999 who relates that Humphrey of Taron was buried ‘apud nobile et famosum castrum eius’. According to Ibn Shaddad al-Halabi, Hunin was first constructed together with Tibnin in 1106; see Ibn Shaddad, 151; see also Ibn al-Furat, trans. Lyons, 123; Al-Qalqashandi, IV, 152.

⁸⁴ *SWP*, II, 33: ‘Tower’.

⁸⁵ For the raid of Baldwin I in 1100 see WT, 10, 10 (11), 464–65; for his second raid in 1107 in which he reduced a castle ‘which the Turks, at the request and . . . the consent of the Arabs, had sited there to bar the way to all Christians’, Albert of Aachen, 10, 28, 644. For a third raid by Baldwin II, see Ibn al-Qalanisi, trans. Gibb, 182; see also Mayer, 1990; Marino, 1990.

⁸⁶ See Abel, 1946.

⁸⁷ WT, 15, 24, 706–07. A viscount is mentioned there in 1158, see Hospital no. 51, 136–38 (RRH no. 333, p. 87).

⁸⁸ Hiestand, 1985, no. 5, 98, 29 July 1103; *Gesta Francorum Iherusalem expugnantium* (ed. RHC, 3, 543) lists Caun Mons among the fortifications conquered by Baldwin I and which lists this castle among them, WT, 11, 26, 535; see Kedar, 1996.

Bibliography

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
<i>CahCM</i>	<i>Cahiers de civilisation médiévale</i>
<i>CCSL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina.</i> Turnholt (1953–)
<i>CSCO</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium.</i> Louvain (1903–)
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>EI</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , 1st edition
<i>El2</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , 2nd edition
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>IHC</i>	<i>Itinera Hierosolymitan Crucesignatorum</i> (saec. XII–XIII), ed. S. de Sandoli, 4 vols., Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Collectio maior, vol. XXIV, Jerusalem (1978–84)
<i>JA</i>	<i>Journal Asiatique</i>
<i>JPOS</i>	<i>Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society</i>
<i>PEFQS</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statements</i>
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Cursus Completus. Series Graeca</i> , ed. J. P. Migne, 161 vols., Paris (1857–)
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Cursus Completus. Series Latina</i> , ed. J. P. Migne, 221 vols., Paris (1844–64)
<i>PO</i>	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i> , ed. R. Graffin and F. Nau, Paris (1907–)
<i>QDAP</i>	<i>Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>Rbe</i>	<i>Revue bénédictine</i>
<i>RH</i>	<i>Revue historique</i>
<i>RHC</i>	<i>Recueil des Historiens des Croisades</i> , ed. Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Paris (1841–1906)
<i>RHC. Arm.</i>	<i>RHC. Document arméniens</i> , 2 vols., Paris (1869–1906)
<i>RHC. Grecs</i>	<i>RHC. Historiens Grecs</i> , 2 vols., Paris (1875–81)
<i>RHC. Lois</i>	<i>RHC. Les Assises de Jérusalem</i> , 2 vols., Paris (1841–3)
<i>RHC. HOcc.</i>	<i>RHC. Historiens occidentaux</i> , 5 vols., Paris (1844–95)
<i>RHC. HOR.</i>	<i>RHC. Historiens orientaux</i> , 5 vols., Paris (1872–1906)
<i>RHDFE</i>	<i>Revue historique de droit français et étranger</i>

- ROL *Revue de l'Orient latin*
 RS *Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores or Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages published under Direction of the Master of the Rolls* (Rolls Series), 99 vols., London (1858–97)
 SWP Warren, Ch. and Conder, Cl., *The Survey of Western Palestine*, London (1882–84)
 ZDPV *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

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